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LENINGRAD DEFENSE

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This book is interesting in that the author made the main subject of his consideration not life

besieged Leningrad (which is the subject of many publications), and the fighting on the distant and near approaches to the northern capital of Russia. He begins his analysis from the moment the German troops invaded the territory of the Baltic States in June 1941 and ends with the Mga operation in July-August 1943.

The book was written using the memoirs of Soviet and German military leaders; memoirs of rank-and-file combatants; official documents, including documents of the NKVD, declassified only in recent years. It clearly shows what a huge price the peoples of the USSR had to pay for the victory in the Great Patriotic War and gives an explanation of the reasons for this.

The manuscript of the book was approved by a number of veterans, participants in the heroic defense of Leningrad, as well as researchers from St. Petersburg museums studying this issue. It is intended for a wide readership.

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Content

Author's Preface Chapter

1. Defeat of the Red Army in the Baltics (June-August 1941)

Chapter 2. Tallinn breakthrough of the KBF (August 1941) 30 Tallinn

crossing 37 Chapter 3. Fighting

on the outskirts of Leningrad (August - early September 1941) 44 "Finnish Front" 44 "German Front" 48

Chapter 4. Storming of Leningrad (September 9-25, 1941) 65 Chapter 5. Blockade and counter-blockade (October - December 1941) 85 Chapter 6. Evacuation of Hanko (November 1941) 129 Chapter 7. Winter offensive of the Red Army (January - February 1942) 135 There are no barriers for Soviet soldiers 141 Chapter 8. The Luban operation (February - July 1942) 157 Chapter 9. Ust-Tosno - Sinyavino operation (July - October 1942) 194 Chapter 10. The Baltic Fleet in 1942 222 Chapter 11. Operation Iskra (January 12-25, 1943) 231 Chapter 12. Continuation of Operation Iskra (February-April 1943) 253 Chapter 13. Mginskaya Operation (July-August 1943)) 263 Conclusion 273

Sources used 278

Author's Preface

BLOCKADE is a special form of warfare, which consists in isolating a blockaded object by violating its external relations. The objectives of the blockades are: to force the enemy to surrender, to undermine the military and economic power of the enemy state, to deplete the forces and means of the blockaded grouping of the enemy's armed forces and SO building favorable conditions for its subsequent defeat and capture of the object of the blockade.

Everyone knows that the Germans were going to strangle the city on the Neva with a blockade. Not even take possession, but simply destroy without accepting surrender. Many books have been written about the besieged Leningrad. Mostly about the resilience of its inhabitants, about bombing, shelling, hunger, the Road of Life, about the joy of a breakthrough and an increase in bread rations. But very little intelligibility can be found in the literature on the military aspects of the Battle of Leningrad, with the exception of the first phase of Operation Iskra.

The German army, by definition, applied a blockade - a "special form" of warfare.

And what were the units of the Red Army doing, concentrated in large numbers around Leningrad? To say that "defense" would be wrong. Professor of the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Red Army, Alexander Ivanovich Verkhovsky (1886 - 1938), once gave a classic definition of defense:

"A battle is called defensive when the troops, having settled down on the spot, voluntarily yield to the enemy the initiative of action and, at the expense of the time won in this way, produce:

1) advance organization of fire; 2) strengthening the terrain and camouflage; 3) preparation of counter strikes.

Such a preliminary organization makes it possible to tie up large enemy forces with smaller forces, and to use the forces freed by defense for

delivering a decisive blow where the senior commander wants to achieve victory.

Near Leningrad, everything was the opposite: the Soviet troops did not stand still, they did not concede the initiative to the enemy and possessed forces much larger than the enemy.

The "War for Leningrad" is a battle unique in its kind, it is one continuous offensive, unthinkably bloody, unsuccessful, often senseless. The troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts participating in it never defended themselves. They were constantly advancing, and the Germans were mainly "defensive battle", linking "large enemy forces." Soviet armies attacked for months in the same directions. Numerically

they always outnumbered the enemy. In full accordance with military theory, the advancing troops suffered more significant losses than the defending enemy troops.

But these losses increased tenfold due to the lack of training of the Red Army, the poor professional training of their commanders and the complete disregard of the high command for the life of their compatriots. The "senior chiefs" really wanted to quickly achieve victory, therefore the battle lasted three years and cost three million killed, missing, injured military personnel. Over a million civilians died during this time in the city itself.

The eminent "red commanders" took the secret of how they did it with them to the grave. Soviet "historians in uniform" wrote their essays on the basis of their memoirs, from which one can learn stories about the heroism of the Red Army soldiers, who cut down German tanks with axes (!) Together with their crews or, under hurricane fire, searched for a lost party card in the neutral zone, but sometimes it's hard to understand with whom this general fought.

Most of them, one gets the impression, were pacifists in life and, carried away by their careers, had little interest in military affairs. For example, General V.S. Popov (1894-1967), who commanded the 70th Army in 1944, remembered all the stages of the Bagration operation only from banquets arranged in honor of the liberation of a particular city.

Only in the last decade, a number of documents on the subject of the Leningrad "sitting" were published, and the memoirs of participants in the events from that side were translated.

And just recently, thanks to modern St. Petersburg enthusiasts, it became possible to see the war from below, "from the point of view of a soldier crawling on his belly through front-line mud, and sometimes sticking his nose into this mud." There are few of them left, but those who remain hope that we will hear them.

(June - August 1941)

As you know, the Barbarossa plan provided for the simultaneous infliction of crushing blows by the Wehrmacht in three strategic directions: Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. At the same time, the capture of Leningrad and the capture of the coast of the Baltic Sea were considered as the most important goal of the offensive of the German troops.

The Nazi leadership, seeking to seize the "cradle of the Russian revolution", took into account not only the strategic, but also the enormous economic importance of the city on the Neva. Here were the leading factories of the most important industries, including aircraft engine, machine building, optical, radio engineering, shipbuilding, tank, electromechanical and others. Approximately 75% of manufactured products accounted for the defense complex.

In addition, Leningrad was the largest transport hub.

Success in this direction allowed the Germans to achieve dominance in a vast region from the Baltic to Scandinavia, reliably provided sea routes for the export of Swedish ore and Finnish nickel to the Reich, and established contact on the land theater with a potential ally in the war - Finland.

For the attack on Leningrad in East Prussia, Army Group North was deployed under the command of Field Marshal Wilhelm-Josef Franz von Leeb (1876-1956). It included the 18th and 16th field armies and the 4th tank group. It had 29 divisions (including 3 tank and 3 motorized), in which there were 787 thousand personnel, 8348 guns and mortars, 679 tanks and assault guns. The actions of the ground forces were to be supported by 830 aircraft of the 1st Air Fleet of Colonel-General Keller, including 203 fighters and 271 bombers.

Directive No. 21 of December 18, 1940 set the North group the task of destroying the Red Army units located in the Baltic States and, having captured the ports of the Baltic Sea, Leningrad and Kronstadt, deprive the Soviet fleet of strongholds. As part of this task, the army group delivered the main blow in the direction of Dvinsk (Daugavpils), pushing its reinforced right wing as quickly as possible to the area northeast of Opochka in order to prevent the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Baltic. Part of the forces of the Army Group Center stationed in East Prussia were also involved in delivering the initial strike in the northwestern direction: two army corps of the 9th field army and the 3rd tank group.

The entire German grouping, concentrated on the border of Lithuania, consisted of 43 divisions, including 7 tank and 6 motorized, over 13 thousand guns and mortars, about 1500 tanks, more than 1000 aircraft.

On the Soviet side, Army Group North was opposed by the troops of the Baltic Special Military District, which was transformed into the North-Western Front with the outbreak of war. They were commanded by Colonel-General Fyodor Isidorovich Kuznetsov (1898-1961), until 1941 he did not command anything higher than the regiment (!). His 8th, 11th and 27th armies consisted of 25 divisions (including 4 tank and 2 mechanized), 1 rifle and 3 airborne brigades. Total 440 thousand

people, 7467 guns and mortars, 1514 tanks, 1814 aircraft.

Three groups were deployed on the territory of Eastern Finland: the German army "Norway", the Finnish South-Eastern and Karelian armies. The Germans were to advance in the Ukhta, Kandalaksha and Murmansk directions, and the Finns - on the Karelian Isthmus and to the north of it, in order to connect with the troops of Army Group North in the Leningrad region and on the Svir River. The Finnish units were also entrusted with the liquidation of the Soviet base on the Hanko Peninsula and the cover of the army "Norway" from the south. In total, 21.5 settlement divisions were concentrated in Finland, in which there were 407.5 thousand people, 3.084 guns and mortars, 192 tanks, 424 aircraft of the 5th Air Fleet and the Finnish Air Force.

Thus, the German command expected to capture Leningrad with a double blow: from the north - by Finnish troops, from the south - by the forces of the German Army Group North. At the same time, the German General Staff understood that the available forces of the Wehrmacht might not be enough for successful operations at once in all strategic directions. Since Hitler considered the capture of Leningrad an "urgent task", the plan "Barbarossa" included the idea of stopping the offensive of the Army Group "Center" at the turn of the Dnieper and transferring part of its forces to the north for the white-bearing completion of the operation to capture the northern capital of the USSR. The attack on Moscow - the dream of the German generals - was not planned before the capture of Leningrad.

The defense of the "city named after the great Lenin" from land, primarily from encroachments by "fascist Finland", was to be provided by the troops of the Leningrad Military District under the command of Lieutenant General Markian Mikhailovich Popov (1902-1969). They numbered 15 rifle divisions, the average staffing of which was 12 thousand people - significantly higher than in other border districts. The artillery units of the rifle formations were fully equipped with personnel and military equipment.

On the eve of the war, the district had 436 thousand soldiers and commanders, 9599 guns and mortars. It consisted of the 1st and 10th mechanized corps. The armored forces in June 1941 consisted of 1857 tanks and 514 armored vehicles, and the air force - 2104 aircraft. In addition, 656 aircraft of the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet (including 172 bombers and 353 fighters) and 115 aircraft of the Northern Fleet were in the northwestern direction.

Two fighter divisions (3rd and 54th), allocated for the air defense of the city, consisted of 200 aircraft. On June 19, the formation of the 7th Air Defense Air Corps began from parts of fighter aviation. Six artillery regiments of the 2nd Corps

The air defenses that covered Leningrad were armed with about 600 new 85-mm anti-aircraft guns 52K of the 1939 model.

The Baltic Fleet included 2 obsolete battleships (Marat, October Revolution), 2 newest cruisers (Kirov, Maxim Gorky), 2 leaders (Leningrad, Minsk), 21 destroyers, 66 submarines, 6 minelayers, 33 sweepers, 7 patrol ships, 48 torpedo boats, several dozen auxiliary ships. Coastal defense consisted of 424

large caliber guns. The air defense system of the fleet had 352 guns.

All this economy was led by Vice-Admiral Vladimir Filippovich Tributs (1900-1977), who, in two years of purges in the armed forces, stepped from the bridge of the destroyer to the position of commander of the fleet - the fourth flagship in four and a half pre-war years *. Comrade Stalin boldly put forward new cadres, however, without hesitation he "pushed" them in.

In general, the forces of the Bolsheviks in the "cradle of the revolution" and around it were considerable. So the stories of Soviet marshals and generals about the quantitative superiority of the enemy are fairy tales for Soviet citizens, from whom the above figures were hidden for half a century, as the greatest state secret.

Only due to the indicated reason (ignorance of the general public) the former chief of the General Staff Marshal Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky (1895-1977) could authoritatively talk about "whole armadas of fascist aviation" and the "three-fold superiority" of Army Group North with its 679 tanks and 830 aircraft over Baltic district, which had 1514 tanks and 1814 aircraft. It was necessary to somehow explain why the beginning of the war for the troops and for this district (i.e., the North-Western Front) and for the entire "invincible legendary" was marked by a series of catastrophic defeats.

Already by the end of the day on June 22, 1941, the Germans, having advanced 20-70 km, captured the crossings over the Neman. The Soviet defense was broken through in several directions, the communication system was broken, and centralized command and control of troops was lost. In response to the offensive of the troops of General F.I. Kuznetsova, who were not oriented in the real situation and did not interact with each other, tried to implement pre-war plans to liberate foreign proletarians from the oppression of the local capitalists and landowners.

Aviation, instead of supporting ground forces, carried out raids on targets in East Prussia and, in the conditions of a well-organized enemy air defense system, suffered heavy losses. And the mechanized corps received an order to launch a counterattack in the zone of the 8th Army, Colonel General P.P. Sobennikova, along the Siauliai-Tilsit highway.

Since December 1936 - head of the headquarters of the KBF; from 1938 - chief of staff; since 1939 - Commander of the Baltic Fleet.

In a three-day oncoming battle with the 41st motorized corps of General Georg Reinhardt (1st and 6th tank, 36th motorized, 269th infantry divisions

- about 400 tanks), the Soviet 12th and 3rd mechanized corps, operating without the support of infantry, aviation, logistics and communication with each other, were defeated, losing almost 1300 tanks. The report of the head of the auto armored department of the North-Western Front on July 2 stated:

"The 3rd mechanized corps does not exist. The remains of the 12th mechanized corps and the remains of the senior staff of the 3rd mechanized corps

lead together, placing them in the area of the city of Luga for a new formation.

Having defeated the Soviet units, Reinhardt sent his corps to the Western Dvina.

The divisions of the 11th Army, Lieutenant General Vasily Ivanovich Morozov (1897 - 1964), also could not withstand the concentrated blow of the enemy's armored fists. The army, having suffered heavy losses and cut into two parts, began to roll back to the northeast. The direction Kaunas - Dvinsk turned out to be practically without cover. The 8th Panzer and 3rd Motorized Divisions from the 56th Corps of General Erich von Manstein (1887-1973), which numbered about 200 tanks, wedged here.

Under pressure from the formations of the 4th Panzer Group, supported by bomber aircraft, the troops of the North-Western Front retreated in divergent directions: divisions of the 8th Army - to Riga, parts of the 11th Army - in the direction of Sventyany - Disna. It was necessary to carry out urgent measures to organize defense on the Western Dvina River and eliminate the breakthrough in the central sector of the front.

The front command decided to organize the defense at the turn of the Dvina with the forces of the 8th Army of General Sobennikov and the 27th Army advanced from the depths under the command of Major General Nikolai Erastovich Berzarin (1904-1945). According to the order of the front commander, the 8th Army, which included the remnants of the 10th, 11th rifle corps and the 202nd mechanized division, were to take up defensive positions at the turn from Riga to Livani. To the left from Livani to Kraslava, formations of the 16th Rifle Corps retreated.

In order to combine the actions of these formations, the front commander decided to push forward the command of the 27th Army with service units. The headquarters of General Berzarin moved by car to the Rezekne region and, on the evening of June 28, took command of units in the Daugavpils direction. From the Moscow Military District, the Headquarters transferred here the understaffed 21st Mechanized Corps of Major General Dmitry Danilovich Lelyushenko (1901-1987) - "only" 175 tanks and 129 guns. However, General Berzarin did not have time to organize the defense before the enemy approached.

Already on the morning of June 26, on the fourth day of the war, the 8th Panzer Division of General Brandenberger, having overcome about 400 km, broke through to Daugavpils, captured two large bridges across the Western Dvina intact and occupied a bridgehead on the right bank. The next day, the 3rd motorized division of General Yan crossed the river.

On June 28, the Germans successfully repulsed the counterattack of the Lelyushenko corps and the abandoned

into the "infantry battle" of the 5th Airborne Corps, pushing them 40 km from Daugavpils. General Manstein tried with all his heart to continue the dashing raid on the Soviet rear, but the commander of the tank group ordered him to stop. General Hoepner feared that the 56th motorized corps, separated from the main forces by 100-130 km, might be surrounded, and therefore decided to wait for the troops of the 16th army of Colonel-General Ernst Busch (1885-1945) and the Reinhardt corps to reach the Dvina .

In the defense zone of the 8th Army until June 29, the enemy did not conduct active hostilities, pulling troops to the Western Dvina. Separate Soviet units broke through to the east, in particular, the remnants of the 12th mechanized corps, which still had about 40 tanks, retreated across the river in the Riga area. The corps headquarters, which had lost contact with the high command and its own units, was surrounded that day in the forests south of Borisel and destroyed by the Germans. Corps commander Major General N.M. Shestopalov was taken prisoner and died of his wounds on August 6 in a POW camp in Siauliai.

On June 29, the German 41st Motorized Corps crossed the Dvina near Krustpils. And on June 30, the advance detachment of the 26th Army Corps of the 18th Army, Colonel General Georg von Kùchler, captured the bridges in Riga. All this extremely complicated the position of the 8th Soviet Army, which retreated to the right bank more slowly than the enemy advanced. On July 1, the Germans completely occupied

Riga.

In the period from June 29 to July 1, the command of the Army Group "North" accumulated forces on the bridgeheads for the subsequent offensive and brought formations into order. According to the order of the Supreme Command of the Ground Forces (OKH), formations of the 4th Panzer Group were to lead a swift offensive through Rezekne in the direction of Ostrov-Pskov in order to cut off the Soviet troops' retreat south of Lake Peipus.

Manstein's corps during this time was completely concentrated in the Daugavpils area, including the third motorized formation - the SS division "Dead Head"; Reinhardt Corps - in the Krustpils area. At the same time, the infantry of the 18th and 16th armies pulled up to the Dvina. In total, at the end of June, there were 25 divisions in Army Group North, including 3 security divisions that were part of the 101st rear corps.

It would seem that the command of the North-Western Front had the opportunity to strengthen their positions and organize a strong defense behind the water barrier. This is what Manstein feared:

"Six days have passed since the sudden raid of the corps on Daugavpils. The enemy had time to overcome the shock that he received when German tanks appeared on the eastern bank of the Dvina.

However, the Soviet command made one mistake after another. At first, on June 29, the troops of the 24th and the 41st rifle corps allocated from the reserve of the Headquarters were

10

ordered to concentrate in the Vilyaka-Ostrov region, to be understaffed and to be ready to launch a counterattack on Daugavpils in order to restore the defense of the 27th Army along the Western Dvina. The next day F.I. Kuznetsov reversed this decision and made another one. He gave the order to withdraw to Pskov, Ostrovsky and Sebezhsy

fortified areas. Apparently, this was the most correct decision in this situation.

On July 1, the Germans did not conduct active hostilities. Soviet front-line intelligence reported that the number of enemy troops on the Daugavpils bridgehead was about an infantry division reinforced with tanks. Upon learning of this and taking into account the requirements of the Headquarters to eliminate enemy bridgeheads, General Kuznetsov canceled his order of June 30 as well. He again ordered the troops to prepare for the offensive, which was to begin on July 2. Nine hours were allotted for preparation, the starting position for the strike had to be taken by 10 o'clock in the morning. The 8th Army was to liquidate the Krustpils bridgehead, the 27th - to destroy the enemy in the Daugavpils area.

In the armies, first of all, they took measures to stop the withdrawal of troops and return units to the line of the Western Dvina in the areas previously occupied by them. On the morning of July 2, the troops of the front were still on the move and were not ready either for the offensive or for defense. But at 5 o'clock in the morning, with the support of all aviation, the Germans struck. As a result, the Soviet armies did not manage to gain a foothold at the turn of the Western Dvina River, their remnants with rearguard battles retreated in divergent directions: the 8th Army - to Estonia, the 27th - to the east, to the Velikaya River, the 11th - in the area Nevel.

The complete defeat of the North-Western Front was coming to an end. A gap appeared in the direction of Pskov, into which the 4th Panzer Group rushed. By the end of the day, German mobile formations, moving along the Daugavpils-Ostrov highway, reached the area 20-25 km south of Rezekne and occupied the city the next day.

Following the development of events in this direction, on June 29, the Headquarters of the High Command instructed to organize defenses at the turn of the Velikaya River in advance and firmly close the direction to Leningrad. She ordered four corps to be concentrated in the Pskov-Ostrov-Porkhov region: the 22nd, 24th, 41st rifle and 1st mechanized. Relying on fortified areas, these formations were to prepare a solid defense in the Leningrad direction.

1st Mechanized Corps, commanded by Major General M.L. Chernyavsky, was fully equipped and initially had 1039 tanks. However, by the time of the deployment of hostilities in the Pskov-Ostrov direction, it was torn apart and lost its importance as a large mobile unit. His 1st Red Banner Tank Division was transferred to the Northern Front, and the 163rd Mechanized Division was reassigned to the command of the 27th Army. In fact, General Chernyavsky had only the 3rd Panzer Division of Major General I.M. Kuznetsova, located in the forest 20 km northwest of Pskov, but also from its composition one tank and one mechanized regiment

eleven

transferred to the 41st Rifle Corps.

41 Corps under the command of General I.S. Kosobutsky (90th, 111th, 118th,

235th Infantry Division) from July 1 began to unload at the stations of Pskov, Karamyshevo, Cherskaya. At the end of the concentration, he was supposed to take the Staro Pskov, Novo-Pskov and Ostrovsky fortified areas. All of his divisions were fully staffed, but like the vast majority of Red Army formations, they did not have engineering equipment and means of communication, in any case, there were not a whole radio station. The 22nd Rifle Corps was concentrated in the Porkhov area, the 24th in the Ostrov area.

On the evening of July 3, General Sobennikov unexpectedly received an order with a motorcyclist to take command of the North-Western Front. The 8th Army was received from him by Lieutenant General F.S. Ivanov. On the same day, Lieutenant General Nikolai Fedorovich Vatutin (1901-1944) was appointed to the post of chief of staff of the front. The former command perished in the encirclement, nothing was known about its fate. Later it turned out that Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov remained alive, at the end of July he got out to his own.

In the meantime, Hoepner's tank group split up: Manstein's corps, having transferred the 3rd motorized division under the command of General Reinhardt, sharply turned in the direction of Sebezh - Opochka; The 41st motorized corps struck at the Island. The Germans won at a pace: the defense in the Ostrovsky region at that moment was occupied only by the 154th separate machine-gun battalion and the 398th rifle regiment of the 118th division, which did not have artillery, grenades, anti-tank mines. The 235th Infantry Division was supposed to arrive here, but its echelons, following from Ivanovo, were delayed on the way.

Meanwhile, on the morning of July 4, Lieutenant General Kirchner's 1st Panzer Division reached the southern outskirts of Ostrov, crossed the Velikaya River on the move, and captured the city by evening. The maneuver was greatly facilitated by the fact that the "red heroes" again did not have time to blow up the road and railway bridges captured by German motorcyclists. The Soviet units, which entered the battle from the wheels, were unable to resist the enemy and hastily left their defensive positions. At that time, the German 56th motorized corps, with difficulty overcoming the swampy terrain, advanced towards the Sebezh fortified area, where parts of the 21st mechanized corps of Major General D.D. Lelyushenko.

Assessing the situation, Sobennikov ordered the commanders of the 41st Rifle and 1st Mechanized Corps to destroy the German units in the Ostrov area and restore the defense along the Velikaya River at dawn on July 5. General Vatutin in a telephone conversation warned General Kosobutsky: "Keep in mind, the liquidation and destruction of the enemy are assigned personally to you, under your personal responsibility. You are responsible for the implementation of this order with your head"

To solve the task, the 468th rifle regiment of the 111th division and the 3rd tank division with heavy vehicles KV-1 and KV-2 were allocated.

At 16.00, Soviet tankers broke into the city, putting the enemy to flight. On

the next day, fighting in the Ostrov region flared up with renewed vigor, taking

fierce character. However, according to the habit that has already become a tradition, the red commanders did not organize interaction, as a result of which they fought in isolation from each other. That is, tanks without infantry, infantry without tanks, and each for himself. Therefore, they failed to consolidate their success. Twice tankers broke into the Island, lost 140 combat vehicles in the attacks, but without the support of infantry formations, the Uder

could not reap it.

The Germans, pulling up additional forces, broke the resistance of the bloodless Soviet units on July 6 and forced them to withdraw. The 1st Panzer Division began to quickly retreat to Pskov, and the 6th to Porkhov. In a memorandum addressed to a member of the Military Council of the North-Western Front, the correspondent of the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper M. Kosarev wrote:

"The commander of the 5th Tank Regiment, Posenchuk, spoke about the battle for Ostrov. From his story it follows that the Germans have very few forces in the Ostrov direction and that the capture of the city by our units failed only because the 3rd Infantry Division shamefully deserted from the battlefield, its commanders fled first, arguing buttonholes and removing insignia. There are a lot of our forces under the Island, but they all act separately, without any interaction.

On July 7, German tanks managed to break through the battle formations of the Kosobutsky corps and quickly move to the southern outskirts of the city. To eliminate this breakthrough, the Soviet command on the morning of July 8 ordered the 41st Rifle and 1st Mechanized Corps to launch a counterattack and destroy the enemy.

The course of hostilities in the Baltic States (June 22 - July 9, 1941)

However, while they were preparing for a counterattack, the German troops resumed their offensive at 12 noon. Formations of the 41st German motorized corps collapsed on parts of the 41st Soviet Rifle Corps, which retreated in disarray across the Velikaya River.

By that time, the artillery of the Soviet rifle divisions was left without ammunition, the personnel were demoralized by the sight of the rear of the 8th and 27th armies retreating to the east through their battle formations and often arbitrarily left their positions, joining the fugitives. The situation was aggravated by impunity for the actions of enemy aircraft. The remnants of the 1st mechanized corps retreated to Porkhov.

The Germans perpetrated this entire pogrom with the forces of three divisions!

True, they failed to break into Pskov on the move. This time, the Soviet sappers managed to blow up the bridges across the Velikaya River and its tributaries without even waiting for their units to withdraw. The units of the 118th, 111th rifle divisions and the 25th fortified area that remained on the western bank, abandoning all equipment and heavy weapons, crossed the river using improvised means.

On July 8, General Sobennikov ordered the troops of the front to go over to a stubborn

defense at the turn of the Pskov fortified area - the Velikaya River - the Cherekha River - Opochka. At the same time, he demanded the creation of groupings on the flanks of the Porkhov direction to launch a counterattack in order to destroy the enemy that had broken through.

Such maneuvers in Soviet military science were called "active defense". General V.I. Morozov, who had already lost all the troops of the 11th Army, was ordered to arrive at Dno on July 9 in order to unite under his command the actions of the 41st, 22nd Rifle and 1st Mechanized Corps.

And again the Germans were ahead. By the evening of July 9, Reinhardt's motorized corps bypassed Pskov from the east, starting to develop an offensive on Luga. The uncontrolled troops of the 41st Soviet Corps fled. Its disparate units, which had lost contact with higher headquarters, were discovered by the command only on July 13 near Struga Krasny and Luga. General I.S. Kosobutsky and the commander of the 118th Infantry Division, Major General N.M., who was in charge of the defense of Pskov. Glovatsky "for cowardice, inaction of the authorities, the collapse of command and control, the surrender of weapons to the enemy without a fight and the unauthorized abandonment of military positions" went under the tribunal - to respond with his head.

By this time, it became clear to the German command that Manstein with two divisions could not break through the Sebezh fortified area, and his troops were transferred back to the Ostrov region.

The fall of Pskov meant that the Army Group North had successfully completed the first half of its strategic mission, invading mobile formations within the boundaries of the Leningrad Region. The battle in the Baltic took only 18 days. 40 Soviet divisions took part in it, including 7 tank and 4 mechanized, but, despite the superiority of their forces, the Red Army lost this battle outright. Its losses amounted to almost 90 thousand people (mostly prisoners), 2523 tanks (140 vehicles per day!), 3651 guns and mortars, 990 combat aircraft. Soviet troops retreated 400-450 km, the ships of the Baltic Fleet had to relocate from Libava (Liepaja) and Vindava (Ventspils) to Tallinn.

On July 8, 1941, a meeting of the Supreme High Command of the German Armed Forces (OKW) was held at the Fuhrer's headquarters, at which one of the main issues discussed was the Wehrmacht's offensive against Leningrad and the start of the Finnish offensive from the north. Hitler approved the plan of further action proposed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, General Colonel Franz Halder (1884-1972), emphasizing the need to cut off Leningrad from the east and southeast with the forces of General Hoepner's 4th Panzer Group.

It was at this meeting that the Fuhrer announced his firm decision "to raze Moscow and Leningrad to the ground in order to prevent the population that we will have to feed in the winter to remain there." The destruction of the two capitals of Russia, according to Hitler, symbolized the victory of the "master race" and should have

inflict an irresistible moral and psychological blow on the hearts of "subhumans", causing "a national disaster that will deprive the centers not only of Bolshevism, but of Russians in general."

In the face of the immediate threat of the enemy's withdrawal to Leningrad, the Stavka decided to enlist part of the forces of the Northern Front to protect the southwestern and southern approaches to the city. July 4, General M.M. Popov received an order to organize a defense in depth along the Luga River from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ilmen. The Stavka demanded that a foreground 10-15 km deep with solid barriers be created at this turn, leaving only the escape routes for the troops of the North-Western Front.

By July 10, the 177th and 191st rifle divisions, the 24th tank division, the 1st separate mountain rifle brigade, the Leningrad rifle and machine gun and infantry schools and almost all artillery regiments of the RGK were hastily advanced to Luga by July 10. These units made up the Luga Operational Group. It was headed by the deputy commander of the front, Lieutenant-General Konstantin Pavlovich Pyadyshev. According to the memoirs of Marshal of Artillery G.F. Odintsova, Pyadyshev - "a talented military leader, strictly adhered to the Suvorov principles of training troops, had an exceptional gift of intuition and foresight, which means so much in battle" - having advanced forward detachments to the Plyussa River, he immediately began to create strong barriers on the Kiev highway and on both sides of the Warsaw railroad.

The Luga group also included units of the 41st Rifle Corps retreating to the north. In order to centralize the combat activities of aviation, the military air forces of the Northern and Northwestern Fronts, the Baltic Fleet and the 7th Air Defense Air Corps were subordinated to a single command in the person of General Alexander Alexandrovich Novikov (1900-1976).

Since July 10, the leadership of the military operations of the Northern, North-Western fronts, the Baltic and Northern fleets has been carried out by the main command of the North-Western direction. The headquarters of the direction hastily put together mainly from the teachers of the Leningrad military academies. The commander-in-chief was the "invincible marshal of the working class", as he was called in pre-war publications, Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov (1881-1969)*.

* It is worth recalling that it was K.E. Voroshilov was the chairman of the military tribunal, according to which the highest commanders of the Red Army, Marshal M.N., were executed in 1937. Tukhachevsky, commander of the 1st rank I.T1. Uborevich, commander of the 2nd rank A.I. Cork, commander V.P. Primakov, commander R. Eideman and a number of others.

As early as June 27, 1941, the Military Council of the Northern Front adopted a resolution on bringing the inhabitants of Leningrad and its suburbs to labor service. Each Leningrader of "both sexes" not associated with military production was sent to the construction of defensive structures. About 150 thousand people worked daily. Evasion of labor service was punishable by 6 months in prison or a fine of up to 3,000 rubles.

The main burden in the creation of fortifications fell on the shoulders of women. They dug trenches, trenches, anti-tank ditches and scarps, arranged forest blockages.

15

German pilots threw leaflets at them: "Ladies! Don't dig holes! All the same, our tanks will pass!

According to the memoirs of the party propagandist A.D. Okorokov, the leaflets caused laughter. So the commissar-general "spoils" directly: they say that women who have left small children and elderly parents at home are digging an anti-tank ditch with shovels and picks. Near Leningrad. In shoes. German planes fly over them, sometimes they drop leaflets, more often bombs. Broken Soviet divisions are running past, fleeing the German "tanochki". But everyone is having fun: "Under Luga, laughing women surrounded me ... I, too, could not help

laugh".

Barricades were erected on the outlying streets of the city, all civil construction projects were turned off in order to direct human and technical resources to the creation of military engineering structures, primarily the Luga defense line. On the near approaches to Leningrad from the southwest and south, the Krasnogvardeisky and Slutsk-Kolpinsky fortified regions were built, and the Karelian UR was improved in the north. A belt of fortifications with nodes of resistance was also created along the Peterhof-Pulkovo line.

Along with the conscription of those liable for military service, from June 29, the forced creation of the Leningrad People's Militia Army (LANO) of 200 thousand people was launched to help the personnel units. The military council of the front initially asked for 100,000 "physically hardy and politically reliable" volunteers aged 18 to 35. But the Leningrad party leader and member of the Military Council of the direction Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov (1896-1948) doubled the "quota" with his own hand, and the age to 50 years.

He learned the true price of the combat readiness of the Red Army and the slogan about the victory with "little bloodshed" back in the Finnish company. Soviet generals in the 1930s were brought to commendable obedience and uniformity, brought up in boundless devotion to the cause of Lenin and Stalin, but possessed only one "tactical technique" - to pour the blood of the Red Army on the enemy to the very nostrils.

The Military Council and the headquarters of LANO were organized. Major General A.I. was appointed commander of the army. Saturday. On July 4, it was decided to form 15 divisions of the people's militia, 12 thousand people each, and immediately send them to the front. The responsibility for the selection of volunteers was assigned to the district committees of the party. By July 10, 110 thousand people were recruited. Most of the militias were workers, representatives of the intelligentsia and students. 80 Leningrad writers and composer D.D. joined the volunteers. Shostakovich. In a short time, the first three divisions of the general

numbering 31 thousand people and 15 separate artillery and machine-gun battalions - about 15 thousand more people.

The haste with which these formations were created could not but be reflected

16

on their quality. The militias had almost no heavy weapons, the number of machine guns in the units was much lower than the standard, since the territorial regions that formed the divisions themselves, by virtue of their capabilities, provided them with equipment, weapons and military equipment. Soldiers received Canadian-made rifles stale in warehouses since 1916, sometimes even training ones with a drilled breech, and sometimes nothing at all. In principle, it did not matter, since there was nowhere to take cartridges for them on the front line.

The personnel of LANO, who demonstrated an exceptionally high morale, did not have any military training. Many have never served in the military and have never held a weapon in their hands. The 1st division of the people's militia consisted of 60% of the reserve and people who did not have military training; in the 2nd division there were 3,894 "ryalovyh untrained" people, junior commanders - 205; in the 3rd division, 50% of the personnel had no military training.

Training had to begin with the correct winding of footcloths and the ability to eat rye crackers without turning the mouth into a bleeding wound, but even this simple art was mastered on the way to the front line. For example, the 1st DNO Major General F.P. The homeland was formed for a week, from July 4 to July 10, and already on July 11 it took up defensive positions in one of the sections of the Luga line; The 2nd DNO of Colonel N. Ugryumov completed the formation on July 12, a day later she arrived at the front and took up positions along the Luga River in the Porechie - Ivanovskoye - Sabek region.

The overwhelming majority of the commanders of the divisions of the people's militia came from the reserve, were poorly prepared to lead the conduct of hostilities. Thus, there were six career commanders for the entire 3rd division. Here is what the former fighter of the Izhora battalion of the SV recalls. Sorokin: "We, the fighters of a small factory detachment, went to war, where death is at every step, where you have to beat the enemy yourself. How to beat - we ourselves did not know. Beat and all. Even with a fist, even with a rifle, but only beat! And in fact, what could we then oppose to the enemy? Your military knowledge? We didn't have them. Combat experience? He wasn't there either. Weapon? At first it was very deplorable for us. What then? Breast! And we set her up."

In the period of July 10-14, the 1st Kirov, 2nd Moscow and 3rd Frunze divisions of the people's militia were transferred to the Luga operational group and "dropped out to the battle lines." Somewhat later, they completed the 4th DNO under the command of Colonel [I.I. Radygin, numbering 4267 people, which was also called "light rifle" or "lightweight division in terms of armament and strength." What this means can be easily imagined, or you can read in the memoirs of P.A. Chugay, a former driver of the 84th tank battalion: "The militias of the 4th division came up on the 3rd or 4th. Their appearance was deplorable: many without uniforms, only the eldest had a rifle, the rest had nothing.

In the second half of July, the formation of four "guards" divisions of the people's militia began. The honorary title, according to Zhdanov and Voroshilov, was supposed to mean that these divisions were manned by a "genuine guard of the working class." It is alleged that the workers' guards were "slightly better armed", but still the main weapon was still the chest.

17

Over time, the matter with weapons was corrected, the divisions of the people's militia were renamed into rifle divisions, but the principles for the formation of new formations did not change. By the end of 1941, the Germans defeated and destroyed 186 Soviet divisions - this is 109% of those available on June 22! No more than 8% of the personnel of the Red Army remained.

New divisions were "sculpted" in batches. In 1941 alone, the Bolshevik leadership of the state formed 419 divisions and 305 brigades, immediately sending them to the front. And there the commanders were just carrying out the next important operations, promising Comrade Stalin to certainly defeat some "scoundrel Guderian" or take Kiev by the anniversary of the proletarian revolution, while complaining about the lack of their forces and the exorbitant power of the enemy, and demanding from the Supreme replenishment, replenishment, replenishment.

Again, freshly baked soldiers already in echelons learned to wind footcloths, for the first time they learned about the existence of a military Charter, went into battle and died without having time to remember the name of their immediate superior. Since the losses with this method were huge, combat experience accumulated painfully long. This practice continued until the Victory itself. In this sense, the entire Red Army of the period 1941-1945. can be called the People's Militia Army.

In addition to the divisions and brigades of the people's militia in Leningrad in July-August, other volunteer formations were also created: fighter and partisan detachments, worker battalions.

Seven partisan regiments were also formed with a total number of 6,600 people, which, in addition to civilian volunteers, policemen, and NKVD officers, included about 1,000 border guards. Six such regiments of suicides were sent behind enemy lines already in the first half of July. It was an ill-advised adventure, doomed to a natural ending.

Firstly, the bulky formations, which had neither camouflaged bases nor means of communication, were deprived of maneuverability and secrecy, did not know how, and did not have the opportunity to use guerrilla tactics, they were easily detected by the enemy. Secondly, the tasks they were given were completely non-partisan, namely, "the fight against parts of the enemy army." As a result, the regiments, armed only with small arms, militarily poorly trained, operated mainly in the front line, where the saturation of the German troops was maximum, entered into open battle with regular enemy units using tanks, artillery and aircraft, and quickly died without bringing much benefit. Later, from their remnants, who returned to Leningrad, they created separate sabotage and reconnaissance groups.

In order to prepare the necessary reserve of the city's defenders, on July 13, a decree was adopted on compulsory military training for all men aged 17 to 55 years.

18

In accordance with the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of July 8, a rationing system for the distribution of products was introduced in the city, as well as throughout the country. Workers received 800 grams of bread a day, office workers 600 grams, dependents and children 400 grams. According to the cards, the established norms of cereals, meat, fats and confectionery were issued.

However, many types of goods were still freely sold in stores at fixed state prices, and some basic products could be purchased at commercial prices. For the majority of the townsfolk, the war still seemed something far away and not terrible:

"They expected the imminent victories of our army, invincible and the best in the world, as they constantly wrote about it in the newspapers. During the first days of the war, a peculiar festive atmosphere developed in the city. The weather was clear and sunny, the salas and squares were green, there were many flowers. The city was adorned with incompetent posters on military themes. The streets came to life. A number of recruits in brand new uniforms busily scurried along the sidewalks. Singing was heard everywhere, the sounds of gramophones and harmonicas: the mobilized were in a hurry to get drunk for the last time and celebrate their departure to the front.

Despite the fact that the course of the war no longer fit into the plot of the military-patriotic utopias of the writers Pyotr Pavlenko and Nikolai Shpanov, the Soviet people still believed that "our steel regiments would bring freedom and happiness to all working mankind" *.

*

It is Shpanov who owns the catchphrase about "the smart, tired eyes of the major State Security Pronin.

July 10, 1941 is the official start date of the battle for Leningrad. On this day, German and Finnish troops simultaneously launched strikes in the Luga, Novgorod and Staraya Russian directions, in Estonia and Eastern Karelia.

On the Onega-Ladoga Isthmus, the Finnish army "Karelia" went on the offensive.

The Fuhrer of the German nation in the matter of the speedy capture of Leningrad had high hopes for the "brave people" of Finland, "filled with the desire for revenge." Although no formal agreement was signed with the Reich, and the Finns did not promise anything specifically to the Germans. However, after the fall of Norway and France, the country of Suomi, with a population of four million, found itself between the German hammer and the Soviet anvil, with all its desire, had no chance of maintaining neutrality.

The bitter experience of the Winter War of 1939/40, the continuous political pressure and threats from the Kremlin, uncereceremonious interference in internal affairs only strengthened the conviction of the Finnish people in the hostility of the USSR. The Finns began to look for political support wherever it could be found. An indelible impression was made on them by the occupation and joining the "happy family

19

Soviet peoples" of the independent Baltic republics carried out by the Red Army in the summer of 1940. The Finnish government saw with its own eyes the future prepared for the country. In addition, information about the demands regarding Finland made by Molotov during his November visit to Berlin has already reached the Finnish side.

The Finns feared that the unconditional neutrality they had previously adhered to would only lead to a war against both Germany and the USSR at the same time. It was time to choose one side. The prospects for friendship with Stalin loomed quite clearly, moreover, the vast majority of the "White Finns" categorically did not want to repaint themselves as "Reds". Supreme Commander-in-Chief Marshal Carl Gustav Mannerheim (1867-1951) said in an interview that from the point of view of the Finns, going over to the side of the Soviet Union would mean "the same thing as defeat": "There was nothing surprising 6 that the mood of the people were distinguished by a deep distrust of the Soviet Union. Could we trust such a neighbor who started a war in order to subjugate our country and who, after defining the basic conditions for a peace agreement, STARTED TO MAKE NEW DEMANDS?

The Western powers could not help Finland in any way. At the same time, Germany itself extended its hand, offering to conclude a transit agreement and organize the supply of military equipment. Since the autumn of 1940, the Finns have taken a course towards rapprochement with the Reich. Mannerheim later wrote: "Everyone understood that Germany's interest in Finland was for us the straw that a drowning man grabs at, although no one knew how she could withstand us. The German initiative gave Finland a long-awaited respite after more than half a year of continuous pressure on it. For a while, the demands of the Russians stopped."

Even closer cooperation between the two countries was greatly facilitated by the actions of the Soviet leadership, which suddenly and unilaterally broke the trade agreement, depriving the Finns of the supply of grain, fuel and raw materials. Shortly thereafter, more than 90% of Finnish imports came from Germany.

At the end of May 1941, Finnish-German military consultations were held in Salzburg, during which the Germans hinted at the possibility of an armed conflict between Germany and the USSR. General Dittmar cited the opinion of the developers of the Barbarossa plan: "The decisive prerequisite for conducting operations against Leningrad from the north, as well as the operation to seize the Murmansk railway, was Finland's entry into the war on the side of Germany.

The Soviet Union itself contributed to this. The war started under a trifling pretext in the winter of 1939/40, the harsh conditions of the Muscovite world with which it ended, and the almost open threats to the very existence of Finland from the Soviet Union caused the Finnish people to

feelings of such despair and anxiety that joining a strong Germany, which was then at the zenith of its power, seemed to the Finns the only way out of the situation.

However, the Germans did not put pressure on the Finns, did not share specific plans, the conversations were held in the subjunctive mood, and Finland did not spit with

20

assurances of allied loyalty, avoiding any commitment. In early June, an agreement was reached on the movement of German troops from Norway to the Finnish Arctic, as well as on the joint conduct of hostilities in the event of an attack by the Soviet Union on Finland. At the same time, President Risto Ryti emphasized that Finland intends to remain neutral until she herself becomes a victim of Russian aggression. Hitler did not worry about this, having no doubt that such a meeting would take place. Marshal Mannerheim also knew about this:

"The field for maneuver in foreign policy, if one could speak of any field at all, was very limited. In fact, one could say that everything depended on the independence of Finland, including relations with Germany... The choice between Germany and the Soviet Union led us to a dead end... Finland did not have the opportunity to freely control its own destiny. In practical terms, there was no way to stay away from the approaching conflict."

On June 15, 1941, the Finnish government received a telegram from General Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel (1882-1946), saying that war with the USSR was inevitable. Two days later, a general mobilization was announced in the country. The army mobilized "all the human resources of the country, including recruits of the oldest ages."

The neutrality of Finland by that time was in question, which was facilitated by the transfer of German troops to Lapland, the permission for German minelayers to take refuge near the Finnish coast, and the Luftwaffe bombers to land on June 22 at the airfield in Kuovola.

On the very first day of the German attack on the Soviet Union, Soviet aircraft attacked Finnish warships and coastal fortifications. The artillery batteries of the Soviet base on the Hanko peninsula began shelling Finnish territory, and the valiant border guards violated the border in several places. The Finns, in a hopeless attempt to maintain the remnants of neutrality, endured these outrages for three days. The army was ordered to "avoid any action that might give the Russians a pretext for provocation." Finnish diplomats in all capitals protested and explained the position of their government. As a result, on June 24, both London and Berlin recognized Finland as a neutral country. But Moscow was not satisfied with the peaceful resolution of the situation.

Despite Finland's military preparations, the massive Soviet bombardment that began on June 25, 1941 became the reason for the start of the war. Of course, without declaring war. It was only the governments of the landlords and capitalists who had to comply with the norms of international law, and the first in

In the world, the "republic of working people" did not fight with anyone, it only "provided assistance" to the oppressed classes. "History of the Leningrad Military District" proudly announces:

"June 24 (the Finnish ambassador at that time was trying to find out from Vyacheslav Molotov whether Finland could consider itself a neutral state) The Headquarters of the High Command of the USSR Armed Forces informed the Military Councils of the Northern Front, the Northern and Baltic Fleets that on the territory

21

Finland concentrates German troops and aircraft to attack Leningrad and capture Murmansk and Kandalaksha.

To forestall their attack, at dawn on June 25, Soviet aviation, at the direction of the Headquarters, launched blows at eighteen enemy airfields, making 487 sorties. 30 enemy planes were destroyed on the ground and 14 were shot down in air battles. Attacks on enemy airfields continued in the following days.

At the same time, they successfully bombed Finnish cities, including Helsinki and Turku. The Finns credited themselves with 26 downed bombers flying out on combat missions, as a rule, without fighter cover. It is noteworthy that literally three days before Stalin was still "afraid" of all kinds of provocations. But now he ordered the bombing of his northern neighbor, not really knowing anything about any plans to "capture Murmansk and Kandalaksha." But on the other hand, he still firmly believed that the Red Army would transfer military operations to foreign territory with mighty blows. On the same evening, at a meeting of the Finnish Parliament, it was announced that the war begins with the same thing that started the Winter War - with the attack of the USSR. On June 26, President Ryti announced on the radio a state of war between Finland and the Soviet Union, and Finnish troops were allowed to open fire on border violators. However, according to the Soviet interpretation of events, the aggressor - of course - was Finland:

"The Soviet government and the High Command, not wanting to give the Finnish army a reason to open hostilities, ordered their troops not to open fire until the Finnish ground units went on the offensive ... On June 23 and 24, Finnish aviation tried to bombard Leningrad, Kronstadt and the cities of the Karelian-Finnish SSR.

All this is just a lie. The Finns were not the first to attack the USSR, and Leningrad and Kronstadt were never bombed during the entire war. A special order categorically forbade their air force from even flying over the city.

The main goal of Talvisota (continuation war) was declared the return of the territories lost as a result of the Moscow Peace. Further, everything depended on the course of the war and the desire of the Germans to share what they had acquired with their "brothers in arms". The campaign plan included three phases:

a) an offensive north of Ladoga with access to the Svir River and Lake Onega; 6) liberation of the Karelian Isthmus; c) entry into Karelia.

Since the Finnish General Staff did not have any offensive plans before, it took him three weeks to develop operations and regroup troops.

To solve the first task, a 100,000-strong group was concentrated under

22

command of the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Heinrichs. It included the 6th and 7th Army Corps, as well as the "O" group of Major General Oinonen. A total of 5 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry and 2 infantry brigades.

They were opposed by the 54th, 71st and 168th rifle divisions, the 26th (Sortavala) fortified area and the 55th mixed air division, which were part of the 7th army of Lieutenant General Philip Danilovich Gorelenko (1888-1956).

The Soviet troops that advanced to the line of the state border did not expect any special surprises from the Finns, they did not prepare defensive lines, they had no information about the enemy, they did not even notice the concentration of a 100,000-strong strike force along the only railway line in the area. On July 10, the army of General Heinrichs went on the offensive, with the immediate goal of reaching the northeastern shore of Lake Ladoga, and in the future developing success on Petrozavodsk and Olonets. The main blow at the junction of the 71st and 168th divisions was inflicted by the 6th Corps, reinforced by an infantry brigade, Major General Hyagglunla.

The troops of General Gorelenko, stretched out on a wide front (for example, the 71st division "held" 125 km of the border), failed to repel the blow and began to retreat in eastern and southeastern directions. Through the gap that had formed, the enemy advanced to the Loimola station and on July 14 cut the only railway communication in the 7th Army zone.

On July 16, the Finns captured Pitkyaranta, reached the shores of Ladoga, and the 1st Infantry Brigade of Colonel Lagus, which followed in the forefront, reached the Tuloks River. Gorelenko's army was divided into two parts. The Sortavala group (168th rifle division, 74th separate reconnaissance battalion, one regiment of the 71st rifle division and its reinforcements) was cut off from the main forces and on July 21 was subordinated to the 23rd army. The Finns continued to develop the offensive in three directions: Petrozavodsk, Olonets and Sortaval.

In the current situation, the Military Council of the Northern Front reinforced the 7th Army with one regiment of the 198th mechanized division, a regiment of the 36th anti-tank brigade, two mountain rifle battalions, two tank companies and an armored train.

To eliminate an enemy breakthrough from units and subunits sent

on the Onega-Ladoga Isthmus, formed two operational groups: Petro factory - Lieutenant General M.A. Antonyuk and Yuzhnaya - Lieutenant General Vyacheslav Dmitrievich Tsvetaev (1893-1950). These groups, with strikes from the east and southeast, were supposed to destroy enemy units that had broken through into the Veddozero-Salmi area and subsequently capture the Loymola station.

On July 23, the troops of the 7th Army, after artillery preparation, launched a counteroffensive. Parts of the Petrozavodsk operational group in two days of fighting managed to move several kilometers to the west. The troops of the southern group could not move forward, and on July 24 they were driven back to the eastern bank of the Tulox River.

23

To assist Tsvetaev's group, two battalions from the 4th Marine Brigade, Major General B.N. Nenasheva. The landings landed in a hurry, without preparation, without fire support and, characteristically, without operational interaction with General Tsvetaev, for whose help they started all this.

True, which is a rarity in itself, preliminary air and ground reconnaissance was carried out (at the same time, one reconnaissance group disappeared without a trace), but it did not find the enemy on the islands. Meanwhile, he was there, managed to equip Lunkulunsari, which was connected to the mainland by a lamba, with a coastal battery. So, on July 24, the Marines landed on the island of Mantinsari, on the 27th - on Lunkulunsari. However, the Finns had the opportunity to freely build up their forces, and the paratroopers did not receive any support. The historians of our fleet omit further details, but, of course, "the landing forces pulled back part of the enemy forces," and in the 4th brigade there were two fewer battalions.

By the end of July, the front line had stabilized at the turn of the Tuloxa River.

The Northwestern Front in mid-July had 23 rifle, 5 tank, 4 mechanized divisions, one rifle and three airborne brigades. True, in 22 divisions, losses in personnel and equipment amounted to more than 50%. In total, these 32 divisions and 4 brigades consisted of about 300 thousand people.

Von Leeb had 23 divisions at his disposal for operations in Estonia and attacking Leningrad, including 3 tank and 3 motorized. Army Group North was supposed to use the right flank of the 4th Panzer Group to cut off Leningrad from the east and southeast. Consolidation of the success of the strike force was assigned to the 16th Army. Von Küchler was given the task of cutting off and destroying Soviet troops in Estonia, capturing the Moonsund Islands and the main naval base of the Baltic Fleet, Tallinn.

Without an operational pause, the German motorized corps from the line of Pskov - the Velikaya River rushed to Luga and Novgorod.

Formations of the 56th motorized corps advanced in the direction of Porkhov - Shimsk - Novgorod, aiming to cut the Moscow-Leningrad railway line in the Chudovo region. For a deep detour maneuver, Manshtein had only two divisions - the 8th Panzer and the 3rd Motorized. They had to overcome a heavily swampy and wooded area, unfavorable for the actions of armored vehicles. Nevertheless, already on July 10, the 3rd motorized division took Porkhov in a fierce battle, and the 8th tank division was moving towards Soltsy. The 22nd Rifle Corps (180th and 182nd Rifle Divisions), which was defending in this direction, failed to detain the enemy. The corps was Estonian, a significant part of the commanders and ordinary soldiers from its composition went over to the side of the enemy.

The 41st Corps of Reinhardt, breaking through the defenses of the Soviet troops northeast

24

Pskov, with three divisions went to the Struga Krasnye.

All this time, Leningraders, the local population and the advancing troops on the northern bank of the Luga River were building a defensive line stretching from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ilmen. It consisted of two strips about 175 km long and 10–15 km deep. Mines were laid in front of the front line and in the depths of the defense, they dug anti-tank ditches, scarps, and made forest blockages. Simultaneously with the defensive work, the troops of the Luga Operational Group were intensively preparing for the upcoming battles, and some units had already been fighting in the foreground since July 12.

In order to buy time to prepare the defense on the Luga line, the Military Council of the Northern Front created several barrier detachments and sent them to the Luga-Pskov highway. These detachments included infantry, artillery and engineering units. Here, the formations of the 11th Army retreated with battles.

Supported by active aviation operations and a strong artillery group, the Soviet units put up stubborn resistance to the 41st Motorized Corps, which was forced, due to the rugged and swampy terrain, to operate exclusively along the only road to Luga. On July 12, the frontal German offensive, having lost surprise and maneuver, got stuck in the Plyussa area. This forced General Hepner to abandon a direct breakthrough to Luga and turn the main forces of Reinhardt to the northwest, leaving only General von Leiser's 269th Infantry Division near Luga.

Combat operations in the Luga and Novgorod directions (July 10-30, 1941)

German tankers, having made a 170-kilometer forced march along forest roads, which were considered impassable for heavy equipment, on the night of July 13-14 secretly reached the river in the areas of Ivanovsky and Sabek, 20-25 km southeast of Kingisepp. Although the bridge at Sabek was destroyed before the approach of the 1st Panzer Division, it managed to capture a bridgehead here. Thanks to the actions of the sabotage units of the Branleburg regiment, the 6th Panzer Division of General Landgraf occupied the crossings at Ivanovsky intact and also moved to the opposite bank. However, it was not possible to develop an offensive from the bridgeheads. Russian historian writes:

"The offensive of the German mobile units was stopped by the stubborn and active defense of the troops advancing from Leningrad"

Although, to be precise, it was quite the opposite. Having crossed the Luga, Reinhardt found himself in the same situation as Manstein near Dvinsk, there was practically no serious enemy ahead, Leningrad lay in two transitions, the "panzers" were waiting for the order to attack. However, to conduct a further offensive only with mobile formations without the support of the infantry, von Leeb considered it too risky an undertaking. The main forces of the Army Group "North" and almost all aviation, in accordance with the plan of deep flank coverage of the enemy from the southeast, were aimed at Lake Ilmen and Novgorod. General Reinhardt received a stop order.

25

This allowed the Soviet command to bring additional forces to the bridgeheads, which were unloaded from the echelons right in front of the Germans.

They were immediately thrown into battle by K.E., who personally rushed from Novgorod. Voroshilov. Soviet aircraft dominated the skies, and aircraft from the Baltic Fleet and the 7th Air Defense Fighter Corps were brought in to attack the crossings. Things got to the point that, under the scolding of the marshal, he climbed into the tank and rushed to "spread the enemy" himself, the commander of the Northern Front, but the "thirty-four" was quickly knocked out, and General M.M., who miraculously escaped. Popov immediately received a wick "for reckless prowess."

However, the Marshal of the USSR had nothing to do there, but he could not lead the war on the map, the man was not of that temper. Byvityi commander of the 23rd Army, General A.I. Cherepanov said:

"Voroshilov's style of activity was, of course, influenced by the attachments and ideas of the period of the civil war, during which he was formed as a mature and major Soviet military leader. Even then, we know this, he did not sit in headquarters and did not bow to bullets. But then the nature of the battle was different. And even now, under the new conditions, he was drawn to the troops, to the battlefield, although, of course, it was not possible to see, to grasp here the whole large-scale picture of what was happening, but only a small part of it. The words from the song "the first marshal will lead us into battle" Kliment Efremovich took literally. From here the whole Voroshilov epic was born in the Red Army:

"They say that in 1941, Voroshilov, in order to prevent the withdrawal of some of our units in the direction of the main attack of the Germans, rushed with a group of officers to cut across the retreating ones and thereby restored the situation, preventing a breakthrough of the front."

In a report for this period, the commander of the German 41st Motorized Corps wrote: "For the units at the bridgeheads, the time has come for a stubborn struggle associated with heavy losses. The enemy began to continuously attack them. Then for four weeks the soldiers of the main divisions, accustomed to the rapid

attacks and breakthroughs, waged here, deeply buried in the ground, a positional war.

Therefore, it would be more correct to say that Reinhardt's two divisions by "stubborn and active defense" managed not only to hold, but also, having repulsed all attacks, to expand the captured bridgeheads. Voroshilov and Zhdanov quickly "appointed the guilty": the commander of the Luga task force, the "talented military leader" K.P. Pyadyshev was first removed from his post "for inept leadership of the troops, indiscipline and lack of initiative", and then he was arrested and put on trial for "counter-revolutionary statements" and "disbelief in our strength" (in Khrushchev's times, the execution of this general was blamed on the "Beria clique"). Colonel N.S. Ugryumov was removed from command of the 2nd DNO.

The 36th motorized division of Lieutenant-General Ottenbacher, clearing the eastern coast of Lake Peipsi from Soviet troops, sailed to the Gdov military

26

a section that did not resist for long.

General Manstein, who, as a result of Hoepner's planned maneuver, found himself in an even more isolated position, continued to advance. His troops broke through to the Luga line west of Shimsk.

The situation here has deteriorated sharply. In the order to the troops of the North-Western Front dated 14 July

Voroshilov, the commander-in-chief of the direction, emphasized that a direct threat of invasion was directed over Leningrad and demanded the most decisive measures from the commanders of all levels:

"While the troops of the Northern Front are courageously fighting the brutal fascist Shutskor hordes on the line from the Barents Sea to Khanko and Tallinn, they are heroically defending every inch of our native Soviet land, the troops of the North-Western Front are not

always giving a due rebuff to the enemy, they often leave their positions without even entering into a decisive battle, which even more encourage the insolent enemy.

Separate alarmists and cowards not only arbitrarily leave the battle front, but also sow panic among honest and staunch fighters. Commanders and political workers in a number of cases not only do not stop panic, do not organize and do not lead their units into battle, but by their shameful behavior sometimes further increase the disorganization and panic on the front line.

The insolent enemy continues to move forward. I have given instructions to conduct the strictest investigation of all criminal cases of unauthorized abandonment of the front by individual units, commanders and fighters, and all those responsible, regardless of rank and old merit, to be tried by field tribunals with the most severe

punishment, up to

execution...

To establish military order at the front and in the rear, to put an end to lack of will, indecision and slowness in action, not to stop at extreme measures, to destroy cowards and alarmists on the spot.

Since the "impudent" German 16th Army was advancing south of Lake Ilmen in the direction of Kholm and Staraya Russa, a gap of 200 kilometers formed between its formations and the 56th Motorized Corps.

This gap was used by the Soviet command to disrupt the enemy attack on Novgorod and defeat the enemy formations that had broken through to Shumsk. In the period from July 14 to 18, on the orders of Voroshilov, several formations of the 11th Army prepared and

a counterattack was carried out from the north and south on the flanks of Manstein's troops in the Soltsy area.

From the air, the operation was supported by 235 aircraft from four air divisions and a long-range bomber air corps.

The German 8th Panzer and 3rd Motorized Divisions were practically surrounded and cut off from their communications. On the Soviet side, they tried to destroy 3 rifle divisions and the 21st tank division of Colonel transferred from the Karelian Isthmus L.V.

Bunin. In addition, the operation of the 11th Army from the south was provided by the 202nd mechanized division, from the west by the 182nd rifle division. Manstein recalled:

"It cannot be said that the position of the corps at that moment was very enviable ... The next few days were critical, and the enemy tried with all his might to maintain the encirclement."

Fierce fighting lasted five days, on other days the Germans repulsed up to seventeen attacks a day. But Manstein's troops, receiving supplies by air, managed to hold out until July 18, when the SS division "Totenkopf" arrived in time to help them. The encirclement ring was broken, the front was restored at the bottom line. Nevertheless, the Germans were thrown back 40 km, the danger of their breakthrough to Novgorod was temporarily eliminated. In this regard, Marshal

Vasilevsky explained the situation at the level of propaganda clichés of a company commander political officer:

"The puffy enemy was forced to retreat somewhat, and the remnants of his motorized formations fled in panic."

On July 19, the German command ordered the troops of the Army Group "North" to suspend the offensive against Leningrad and resume it only after pulling up the formations of the 18th Army to the Luga line and putting in order the units of the 4th Panzer Group, which by that time had lost up to 50% of the materiel .

At the end of July, Manstein complained to the Chief Quartermaster of the General Staff, Colonel General Friedrich von Paulus (1890-1957), that as a result of misuse tank

troops on unsuitable terrain for this, the casualties in his three divisions "in the past" have reached "already 600 people." It is not clear what period of time the tank general had in mind, but it is known that the troops of the Soviet North-Western Front lost up to 2

thousand people killed, wounded and captured daily.

By forcing the enemy to stop the offensive at the turn of the Luga River, the Soviet troops won almost three weeks to organize defense on the near approaches to Leningrad, as well as to pull up fresh forces to this direction.

In Estonia, the 8th Army under the command of General F.S. Ivanov, transferred by order of Voroshilov on July 14 to the Northern Front, successfully repelled the attacks of two enemy infantry divisions from the 26th Army Corps at the Pärnu-Tartu line with two battered rifle corps.

To assist the Soviet troops and provide lake communications, by order of July 3, the Chudskaya military flotilla was formed with the main base in Gdov. The basis of its combat "power" was five training wheeled and screw steamers of pre-revolutionary construction, which belonged to the Dzerzhinsky Naval School. On July 10-12, these rusty vessels, launched before 1914, were fitted with two 76-mm Lender cannons and nine 45-mm guns taken from the Aurora cruiser. As a result of such modernization, the Narova, Issa, Embakh, Plussa gunboats and the Uku messenger ship were received. There were also several boats and tugboats.

General F.S. Ivanov, not having information about the forces and intentions of the enemy, speculatively came to the conclusion that the Germans would rush to Tallinn with all their might. Therefore, he concentrated two-thirds of the army on his right flank. But the enemy decided otherwise. On July 22, having brought up three more infantry divisions, he resumed the offensive in Estonia, striking at the junction of the 10th and 11th corps in the direction of Pyltsama - Mustve.

From an operational point of view, this direction was considered "important", because the road to Narva and further to Leningrad opened beyond the Estonian towns. But the Soviet troops "did not stand" there. Rapidly advancing eastward, encountering virtually no resistance, the Germans reached the western coast of Lake Peipus in the Mustve region on July 25, cutting off the 11th Rifle Corps from the main forces. The command of the Northern Front sent an enlightening cipher message to the Military Council of the 8th Army: "Divisions of the reserve 26th Corps are operating in front of the front of your army, having extremely extended and empty rear areas. The enemy acts boldly, impudently, coming out in small parts on your

28

communication, creating a pouring appearance of the environment.

This adversary, with skillful active leadership, can and must be destroyed. However, instead of active actions, the command of all levels reacts extremely painfully to the appearance of small enemy groupings in its rear and withdraws troops, instead of organizing them to actively defeat the enemy coming to the rear ...

I order:

- 1). Cease the unjustified withdrawal of troops, prevent cordon defense, and proceed to active operations by strike groups along the flanks and rear of the breaking through enemy.
- 2). Create a strike group in the 10th sk sector to counteract enemy breakthroughs and decisively suppress it.

On the afternoon of July 22, four German fighters fired cannons and machine guns at the ships of the Chudskaya flotilla. Several sailors died, the deck was broken on the Narova. This raid made such a strong impression on the commander of the flotilla, Captain 1st Rank N.Yu. Avraamov that he requested permission to sink the ships. A categorical refusal followed from Leningrad, but the activity of the flotilla was still paralyzed.

The remnants of the 11th Rifle Corps by July 30 made their way from the encirclement to the north along the shore of the lake and tried to gain a foothold at the turn of the Mustve River.

General F.S. Ivanov was replaced as commander-8 by Major General I.M. Lyubovtsev, who "ruled" for exactly a week. Despite the arriving marching reinforcements and equipment, the fresh 268th rifle division and the 4th division of the people's militia, the army continued to retreat. By the end of August 7, the Germans reached the coast of the Gulf of Finland.

The 8th Army was cut into two isolated parts, the 10th Rifle Corps (10th, 16th, 22nd Rifle Divisions) of Major General Ivan Fedorovich Nikolaev (1890-1944) rolled back to Tallinn. The newly appointed army commander, Lieutenant General Pyotr Stepanovich Gshennikov (1895-1941) received the task

form a strike force, "destroy and defeat the enemy standing in front" and restore the situation. But instead, he withdrew the remnants of the army, which received the name "Eastern Group" in combat orders, to the eastern bank of the Kunda River. ,

The only combat exit of the ships of the Chudskaya flotilla took place on August 12, when the gunboat "Embach" with four motor boats landed 60 paratroopers in the rear of the Germans. Apparently, the crews entered the lake under the guns of paratroopers. The next day (August 13), they abandoned all the ships and watercraft of the flotilla at the mouth of the Ala-lygi River, and they themselves fled into the forest.

29

Chapter 2. TALLINN BREAKTHROUGH KBF (August 1941)

In the event of a war with Germany, People's Commissar of the Navy of the USSR Nikolai Gerasimovich Kuznetsov (1902-1974) set the following tasks for the Baltic Fleet: a) be ready to repel amphibious assaults on the islands of Ezel and Dago; b) together with the air force, destroy the enemy fleet when it tries to penetrate the Gulf of Riga and the Gulf of Finland; c) to assist the flanks of the ground forces, which were supposed to smash the enemy on his own territory.

The navigators of the 1st mine-torpedo, 37th and 73rd bomber regiments of the KBF plotted courses on the flight maps to Memel, Tilsit, Pillau, Koenigsberg and Danzig.

The main power of the Kriegsmarine was directed against England. The German High Command planned to achieve the destruction of the Baltic Fleet by capturing its bases from land and delivering air strikes. Up to this point, it was necessary to block the Soviet ships and ensure their communications in the maritime theater.

For operations in the Baltic, the Germans allocated 28 torpedo boats, 10 minelayers, 7 patrol ships, 15 trawlers and 5 submarines. The operational plans of the German command were to ensure that "with weak forces, but very skillfully, put the Russian fleet in unfavorable conditions through the use of active minefields."

For these purposes, it formed three mine-protecting groups, giving them two flotillas of torpedo boats and two flotillas of minesweepers. In the period from 20 to 23 June 1941, these groups secretly set up 1062 mines and 368 mine defenders in the operational zone (!) of the Baltic Fleet. How the enemy managed to do all this under the conditions of the absolute superiority of the Soviet fleet, under its very nose, and in the conditions of white nights, this is a great mystery. Neither the Soviet ship patrols, nor the MBR-2 seaplanes flying out for reconnaissance several times a day found anything suspicious.

According to Rear Admiral N.M. Sobolev, who served in the operational department of the Main Naval Staff, Soviet intelligence identified German minelayers in Finnish ports and the command "it was clear" that they

arrived there "not for a walk, but with a specific military purpose." However, "we did not attach due importance to this fact. It was finally appreciated only after the minelayers completed their combat mission.

In the future, the Germans continued the "mine war". Until July 10, encountering absolutely no opposition, they laid 1,738 mines and 1,659 mine defenders in the Gulf of Finland alone. Soviet ships, on the basis of the instructions of the Main Naval Headquarters "to lay mines around the clock, use everything that is possible," did the same, building a mine artillery position at the mouth of the bay according to the plans of the times of admirals N.O. Essen and A.V. Kolchak.

thirty

It was only very recently that Russian naval historians admitted that "the creation of a mine and artillery position at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland did not make sense. Once again, we are trapped in a pattern."

At the same time, neither before the war, nor with its beginning, no one organized reconnaissance trawling, because according to the same "template", these were enemy ships with landing forces on board that were supposed to rush to the Soviet shores and die on Soviet mines. In reality, the opposite happened. Already on the night of June 22-23, a detachment of ships that left Tallinn to lay mines ended up on a German minefield. Here is what Rear Admiral N.M. writes about this operation. Sobolev:

"The ships laid mines in the Gulf of Finland near the main base of the fleet - Tallinn. They operated at night. There was no enemy in the area, no one interfered with mine laying. And in these conditions, the command of the KBF sent the cruiser "Maxim Gorky" and destroyers to cover the minelayers. Was such a cover required? Hardly. Nevertheless, the covering ships went to sea, because this was envisaged by the plan and the classical scheme. But no one guessed to give the order to sweep the maneuvering area of a detachment of ships. There was no such item in the plans.

As a result, the cruiser "Maxim Gorky", which was torn off the bow to the 60th frame, and the destroyer "Gordy" were heavily damaged, the destroyer "Angry" and the minesweeper T-208 "Pulley" were killed.

From the first days of the war, minesweepers were sorely lacking. In accordance with the most offensive doctrine in the world, they were almost never built. The fleet needed approximately 200 ships of this class, but only 25 units were available by June 22. I had to mobilize tugboats and fishing trawlers for military service, converting them into minesweepers. But they were also most often used for other purposes: they carried out sentinel service, transported bombs and aviation fuel to Ezel Island, providing for the activities of long-range aviation that attacked Berlin, and continuously died.

Anti-mine weapons remained at the level of the First World War. It was represented by Schulz undercutting trawls of the 1898 model, kite trawls of the 1911 model of the year and guard paravanes of the K-1 type. What are non-contact magnetic and antenna mines of the enemy like EMS, TVM or TMA and how to deal with them, the RKKF did not know and did not want to know, their

samples were not produced. True, for the sake of truth, we note that the Baltics had MIRAB induction mines of domestic production, put into service in 1939, as many as 20 pieces, so when the "rooster pecked", they had to buy such mines from the British.

The convoys were escorted directly behind the trawls without the preliminary mine reconnaissance required by the Manual. Not so much even because of the lack of anti-mine ships, but with the paranoid goal of "masking the fairways" from the eyes of the adversary. This innovation was secured by the order of the commander of the fleet on August 10, although Tributs himself noted his idiocy in his memoirs: "Navigational features (banks, shoals, islands) make it possible to navigate the Gulf of Finland strictly in certain directions, which

31

geographies were well known to the enemy. Therefore, for clogging our communications with mines, he had ideal conditions.

Another "surprise" was the effectiveness and impunity of the actions of German aviation - on the one hand, the helplessness of the "Stalin's falcons" - on the other. And Soviet ships were distinguished by powerful artillery and torpedo, but weak anti-aircraft weapons.

The command of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet did not see in the sea not only an equivalent, but no enemy at all, and meanwhile they were losing ships almost daily. So, on June 23, at the passage from Libava to Ust-Dvinsk, a torpedo from the German submarine O-144 sank the M-78 submarine.

On June 24-26, when leaving Libava, the destroyer Lenin, the submarines S-1, M-71, M-80, M-83, Ronis and Speedola, located there, had to be blown up. Destroyer Commander Lieutenant Commander Yu.M. Afanasiev, who led the destruction of the ships that were being repaired, was later shot by a military tribunal for an unauthorized, and therefore punishable initiative. The command and political department of the base evacuated with a clear conscience on torpedo and patrol boats, leaving the garrison to "repel the frenzied attacks of the fascists" and break through to Vindava. Few managed to escape from the encirclement. The former chief of staff of the KBF, Admiral Yuri Alexandrovich Panteleev (1901-1983), also reports in his memoirs: "We never prepared for the evacuation of our bases, and therefore the retreat from Libava was tragic. I condemn someone for this

I don't take. We reaped the fruits of what we sowed, because we were going to fight "only in foreign territory"

With the fall of Libava, the fleet lost its forward naval base; army - the 67th rifle division and its commander, Major General N.A. Dedayev, who died during the defense of the city. Regarding the further fate of the defenders, Admiral Yu.A. Panteleev OPENLY FANTASIES: "Most of the sailors and foot soldiers remained behind enemy lines, joined the partisans and selflessly fought against the invaders until the Baltic was liberated by our troops" (!)

Having left Libava for a breakthrough, unable to dive, submarine C 3 was intercepted by Schnellbots 5-35 and 5-60 from the 3rd Flotilla and sunk with two torpedoes after 35 minutes of artillery combat. At the place of her death, the Germans picked up 20 people.

On June 27, in the Gulf of Riga, torpedo boats of the 2nd flotilla attacked the destroyer Storozhevoy. The explosion of a torpedo tore off the bow of the ship along with the superstructure and mast, the commander captain of the 3rd rank I.F. was killed. Lomakin and 84 crew members, but the second half of the destroyer remained afloat, she was towed to Tallinn, then to Kronstadt. On the same day, German boats damaged and captured the TKA-47 torpedo boat, and the aircraft sank the TKA-27.

On June 28, near Dago Island, a German submarine (0-149) torpedoed a Soviet M-99 boat; a boat went missing in Danzig Bay C-10.

32

In the abandoned Vindava, the Germans got five transports (a total of about 10 thousand tons).

On July 1, off the island of Vormsi, the boat M-81 sank from the explosion of a bottom mine, two people were saved; near the island of Saare-ma - "privatized" in 1940, together with Latvia, the minesweeper T-299 "Imanta". On July 6, a T-216 hit a mine and instantly sank, on July 7 - TShch-101 "Petrozavodsk", on the 9th - TShch-89 "Burbot".

On July 16, the destroyer Terrible was blown up, the explosion completely destroyed the bow, the ship was hardly towed to Kronstadt, until the end of the war it did not go to sea. On July 18, the Tucha guard ship was blown up on a Soviet mine, the ship lost its rudder and propellers, and 8 people were killed. When attacking an enemy convoy with artillery fire, TKA-123 was destroyed. A day later, in the Moonsund Strait, as a result of a direct hit by an air bomb in the boiler room, the destroyer Angry sank, killing 35 crew members, and more than 100 people were injured. On July 10, the transport "Rasma" with a displacement of 3200 tons was blown up by a mine and washed ashore.

On July 21, the German submarine 0-140 torpedoed the Soviet boat M-94 of senior lieutenant N.V. Dyakova, eleven sailors miraculously escaped. On the same day, the tanker "Railwayman" was killed by mines. On July 22, in the Gulf of Riga, in a battle with German boats, the icebreaker Lachplexis and the TKA-71 accompanying it were killed. The next day, the Ristna minelayer was blown up, but remained afloat.

On July 26, a Finnish gunboat sank TSh-238 with artillery fire. On July 27, in the Irbensky Strait, covering the ships that laid minefields, the destroyer "Brave" was blown up and finished off with torpedoes. On July 29, she hit a mine and sank with the entire crew of the TShch-51 Serpent, on July 30 - T-201 Zaryad. On July 31, Finnish artillery heavily damaged the T-203 "Patron".

Dejected by everyday losses, the naval authorities, including the flagship miner (!), Could not find an answer to the question why the ships

explode, even if they follow directly the minesweepers? They were in deep thought until the "most qualified specialists" called in from Leningrad to combat the mine danger explained that the enemy (and we, too, in the warehouse of the same flagship miner) have such mines - electromagnetic and acoustic, and special trawls are needed to combat them. "That's how it is! - the "command" was surprised. Where can we get these trawls?

Admiral Yu.A. Panteleev recalls: "It turned out that the Marine Scientific

the technical committee has long developed domestic electromagnetic and acoustic trawls. They have already passed all the tests and received the highest marks. Now both trawls are being further improved. This statement shocked us all. It turns out that we have good trawls, but we want to make them even better, and

meanwhile, our ships are undermined and sinking, people are dying! The commander of the fleet requested through Moscow at least two copies of trawls "...

On August 2, the S-11 boat, commanded by Captain Lieutenant A.M., died on bottom mines. Wednesday, August 3 minesweeper T-212 "Stag" died on the 7th

33

dive-bombers sank the Spinoza tanker and damaged the destroyer Engels. The S-6 boat went on a military campaign and no longer contacted. On August 8, enemy aircraft sank the TShch-76 "Val" and the destroyer "Karl Marx", which killed 38 people. Next to the destroyer, the boat-hunter MO-229 with the entire crew went to the bottom. On August 10, the transport VT-572 "Bartava" sank.

On August 11, the T-213 Krambol hit a mine and died. The destroyer Guarding and the transport Vyacheslav Molotov received heavy damage from mine explosions. Aviation drowned the Altai transport. In the Irben Strait with the entire crew, the Surop minelayer and the support vessel were killed.

On August 13, German and Finnish torpedo boats sank the Lenvodput-12 and TShch-41 transports. Hit a mine and sank TShch-68. On August 15, the T-202 Bui and the Krecheng transport were killed by mines, on August 16 - the messenger ship Artillerist.

On August 18, the destroyer "Statny" died from a mine explosion, the commander, captain of the 3rd rank N.N. Alekseev; On the 19th, torpedo boats sank the Merikaru icebreaker and TSh-80. On August 20, the boat MO-207 was killed by mines, on the 21st - the transport "Leeni" and the hydrographic vessel "Nord". The hospital ship Sibir sank from an air strike, killing more than 600 people with it.

On August 23, in the Vyborg Bay, having received damage, the armored boat BKA-215 fell ashore and fell into the hands of the Finns. A day later, while escorting the convoy, the destroyer Engels was killed on a minefield near Cape Yuminda (only 11 people out of 180 crew members were saved), minesweepers T-209 Knecht and T-214

"Yoke"...

During the same period, the Baltic Fleet was able to record on its combat account an auxiliary vessel and a tanker sunk by S-11 and S-4 boats, a German submarine O-144 destroyed by ShShch-307, as well as an enemy minesweeper and guard ship that died on mines.

With the enemy's entry to the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, Soviet sea communications came under attack from enemy aircraft, and the ships of the Baltic Fleet were trapped in the Tallinn trap. On August 14, Marshal Voroshilov appointed the commander of the Baltic Fleet, Vice Admiral V.F., responsible for the defense of the main base of the fleet. Tributs, subordinating to him the troops of the 10th Rifle Corps.

Neither theoretically nor practically the fleet was ready for anything like this. No one, even in a nightmare, could see that the naval base, located hundreds of kilometers from the state border, would be threatened by the enemy from the land direction.

The rapid retreat of the Red Army from the Baltic created an extremely difficult situation for the fleet. Following Libava, Vindava and Riga fell, the entire basing system was disrupted and was under continuous attacks, two-thirds of the fleet's fuel reserves fell into the hands of the enemy.

34

The position of the 50,000-strong Soviet garrison in Tallinn, blocked by units of four German infantry divisions, also did not cause optimism. Already in the first ten days of August, it became obvious that the troops and the fleet would have to be withdrawn, however, the task of preparing for the evacuation was not set before the naval command.

On August 19, the enemy reached the forefront of the defense of Tallinn. On the morning of the next day, after artillery preparation, the Germans went on the offensive along the entire front. The main blow was delivered from the east in the coastal sector of defense. For three days, with the support of aviation and 270 guns of naval, coastal, railway, corps and anti-aircraft artillery, the defenders of the base repelled enemy attacks.

On August 25, Soviet troops retreated to the main line of defense. From that time on, the city and port were shot through to the full depth. Direct hits from artillery shells were received by the leader "Minsk" and the destroyer "Glorious", the transport "Lunacharsky" sank. The situation was becoming hopeless, but Admiral Tributs received the strictest order from Voroshilov: there could be no question of withdrawal, on the contrary, the enemy must "strike in the flank and rear." On this day, the Military Council of the Fleet, reporting the situation to the commander-in-chief of the direction, again requested instructions in the event of a German breakthrough into the city, specifically noting that in such a situation, landing ground troops on transports would no longer be possible. Voroshilov forwarded the question to the Kremlin. Stalin was surprised: "What, are the ships still in Tallinn?"

Even before that day, at your own peril and risk, the naval command gradually

took out materiel from Tallinn on single ships and small convoys. In order not to get on the lists of "alarmists", these transportations had to be hidden not only from the enemy, but also from their own vigilant "authorities". So it was possible to "quietly" take out part of the arsenal, part of the ship repair enterprise, up to 15 thousand tons of technical equipment and other cargo, evacuate about 17 thousand women and children, 9 thousand wounded military personnel. Nevertheless, many coastal establishments, large and small civilian ships remained in the main base. On the morning of August 26, Admiral Tributs finally received a directive, at least a week late, to evacuate to Kronstadt. One day was allotted for the preparation of the operation!

When developing the transition plan, it was necessary to choose one of the three existing fairways. The southern one ran between the coast and the southern edge of the German Yuminda minefield. Until mid-August, more than 220 transports passed along this route, of which only one was blown up by a mine. But on August 12, by directive of the Military Council of the North-Western Direction, without consulting the opinion of the sailors, Marshal Voroshilov, fearing the possible presence of enemy artillery batteries in the area of the village of Kunda, closed this area for navigation. The northern fairway, which ran along the edge of the Finnish skerries, was the safest: there were almost no mines here. However, the one who proposed this route automatically found himself under suspicion of wanting to hand over Soviet ships to the enemy. In addition, naval intelligence had no idea what forces the Germans managed to concentrate in the Finnish skerries.

35

Therefore, willy-nilly, I had to choose the central one - the fairway laid in the middle part of the Gulf of Finland, the most dangerous in terms of mines. The Yuminda barrier was set up here, which the Germans constantly reinforced. During the period from 11 to 27 August, 9 convoys passed through it. At the same time, out of 40 ships and vessels, 14 (35%) were killed or damaged by mine explosions and enemy aircraft. The Soviet ships never cleared or reconnoitred the Yuminda barrier, its borders were unknown, the number of mines "no one could tell us."

As it turned out after the war, the giant caravan was to cross the minefield, which consisted of 30 lines of mines and mine defenders, head-on! Its density was not less than 150 mines and 105 mine defenders per mile along the front, for each cable (185 m) of the trawl strip there were at least 15-16 mines. A barrier of such a density can be normally forced only if it is conducted during daylight hours, which makes it possible to detect and destroy undercut mines, behind two or three rows of contact trawls, with obligatory sheathing of the edge of the trawl strip.

But the 10 basic, 18 mobilized and 26 boat minesweepers that ensured the transition were clearly not enough for this (according to the estimates of the miners, at least 100 minesweepers were required for such an operation). In reality, ships and vessels could follow only one or two rows of trawls, and some of them generally had to follow on their own. The fairway "for reasons of secrecy" was not fenced. It was not possible to do this in the course of the breakthrough, since the minesweeping milestones, including the luminous ones, had already been loaded onto one of the transports. And no one knew which one. There was also no required number of spare trawls.

Of the 26 boats of the Rybinets type, armed with Schultz trawls, and several boats of the KM and KLT types with boat trawls, only two were used for their intended purpose. As for the calculation of the probable number of losses in the ship's composition during the breakthrough, then, according to Admiral Panteleev, "under the roar of shells exploding in the gap, we did not particularly try to focus on such unpleasant figures."

The breakthrough from Tallinn to Kronstadt was supposed to be made in marching order, consisting of a detachment of the main forces, a detachment of cover, a rear guard and four convoys. In the detachment of the main forces under the command of Vice Admiral V.F. Tributs included 28 warships, including the flagship cruiser Kirov, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines, 6 small hunters. The cover detachment, which consisted of the leader "Minsk", two destroyers, one submarine, patrol and torpedo boats, was commanded by Rear Admiral Yu.A. Panteleev, rearguard - Rear Admiral Yu.F. Rall holding the flag on the destroyer Kalinin.

The detachment of the main forces was supposed to cover the first and second cavalry on the transition from Cape Yuminda to Gogland Island; cover detachment - to protect the second and third convoy at the passage from Keri Island to Windloe Island; rearguard - cover the third and fourth convoys from the rear. Instead of creating one heavily guarded cavalry from ships of the main classes and the largest ships,

36

Soviet admirals divided their forces into seven groups of completely different types of ships - from schooners to destroyers - thereby violating an important principle of military art (the principle of concentration of forces and means in the main direction).

A special detachment was formed from the forces of the Kronstadt naval base under the command of Captain 2nd Rank I.G. Svyatov. It consisted of 12 minesweepers, 4 patrol ships, 6 torpedo boats, 8 small hunters, 2 tugs, 4 motor boats and was deployed in the area of Gogland Island. He was supposed to protect the convoys from attacks by torpedo boats and submarines on the final section of the route, provide them with escort behind the trawls, and provide assistance to ships in distress.

Submarines M-98 and M-102 were sent to the positions of the Porkkala lighthouse and Helsinki with the task of "sinking the enemy's military and merchant ships", covering the departing fleet from the west. It was not possible to provide permanent air cover along the entire route due to the remoteness of coastal airfields. Only at the end of the route it was planned to take 65 fighters into the air with the task of protecting warships in every possible way in the first place.

On August 27, at 11 o'clock, Tributs gave the order to withdraw the troops and land them on the Sula. The withdrawal was covered by coastal artillery and barrage of ships. In the first place, the ships were filled with the wounded, employees of the institutions of the fleet and individual units; at the same time, military equipment and the most valuable materiel were loaded on the Kirov cruiser.

The enemy carried out intense fire on the city and port, and his aircraft in small groups (5-9 aircraft) bombed transports and ships throughout the daylight hours. At 18:00, subversive teams began to destroy valuable objects and materiel. In the Russian-Baltic harbor and at the Pakri lighthouse, steam locomotives and wagons (more than a thousand) simply rolled along the track into the sea (later the Germans raised almost all of them). An oil storage facility was raised in the Minnaya Harbor. There were still a lot of watercraft left in the port, some of which were destroyed by the enemy, some were flooded by the teams, some were simply abandoned.

Tallinn crossing

The landing of the main forces of the 10th Corps began at about 22:00 and continued until dawn. To ensure their withdrawal, the artillery of the fleet and the corps conducted a massive, stationary barrage for two hours.

In total, over 20 thousand military personnel and civilians, as well as about 7.5 thousand civilians, were taken on board the ships and vessels. With the help of tugboats, ships full of people and equipment went to the area of collection and formation of convoys. After midnight, about 4,000 more

37

fighters and commanders. They never came for them, despite the fact that four transports left Tallinn unloaded.

The first convoy was supposed to start moving on August 27 at 22:00, and the last one was to leave the raid on August 28 at 10:30. But the wind, which increased to 7 points, prevented. The trawlers could not go with trawls. Tributuz ordered all ships and vessels to anchor off the islands of Naisaar and Aegna until the weather improved. Before anchoring, up to 30 schooners, tugboats, motorized boats and the Shch-301 submarine, which returned from a military campaign, joined the convoys.

Due to the forced parking, the exit dates were pushed back, so it was necessary to force the minefields not during the day, as the plan provided for, but at night. But the German command, for some reason, failed to take advantage of the situation and did not launch a massive air strike on a huge accumulation of ships, boats and suls (228 pennants).

August 28 at 11.35, after the wind died down, the ships began to weigh anchor. The detachment of the main forces began to move about 16 hours. At 17.15, a covering detachment set out, overtaking the transports and at the same time covering them from the west. The rearguard held out at the exit from the Tallinn raid until dark, covering the general retreat. At this time, the barrage detachment mined harbors, raids and the area near the island of Aegna.

The convoys followed the slow-moving minesweepers at a speed of no more than 6 knots. Detachments of the main forces and cover, each behind 5 trawlers, went at a speed of 10-12 knots. 3 hours after shooting from anchors, the ships and ships stretched into one

a line longer than 15 miles (28 km). In total, in the breakthrough, according to Rear Admiral G.A. Zubkov, 153 warships and boats and 75 subs participated, including one cruiser, 10 destroyers, 9 patrol boats, 3 gunboats, 11 submarines and 10 base minesweepers. A detachment of the main forces went ahead, then the first convoy, a covering detachment, the third and fourth convoys, and in parallel, a little to the north, the second convoy went.

In the afternoon, several raids were carried out by enemy aircraft. In the area of the island of Mohni at 18.30, German planes attacked the Krishjanis Waldemars transport. Dodging bombs, he left the swept lane, hit a mine and sank. At Cape Yuminda, the headquarters ship, the Vironia transport, was damaged as a result of an air attack, on which departments of the headquarters and political departments of the fleet were evacuated. At about 10 p.m., he died from a mine explosion along with the rescue tug Saturn.

During the raid, the Alev transport was damaged, which, shortly after, also hit a mine and sank. On board were 1280 people, including more than 800 wounded. Only people could be saved. In the area of Cape Yuminda at 18:00, the VT-530 Ella from the first convoy was blown up, with 905 people on board, including 693 wounded. When the ship Neptune approached the place of Ella's death, only 49 people were floating on the surface of the water.

In the area north of Cape Yuminda, the leader of Minsk, the destroyer Skory and Glorious, repulsed two night attacks, as the sailors thought, by five German or Finnish torpedo boats with artillery fire. But, as it turned out later,

38

enemy torpedo boats did not leave the sea on the night of August 28. Soviet ships fired on their TKA-73, 74, 94, 103, 113 torpedo boats, which were trying to join the main forces. At the same time, TKA-103 was sunk.

A few minutes before darkness fell in the area of Keri Island, a detachment of the main forces, followed by others, entered the Yuminda minefield. The night of August 29 was the most difficult. The formation of five basic minesweepers provided reliable cover for the ships being conducted in a strip up to 3 cables (560 m) wide. However, he was only good until the caravan trawls killed the explosions of mines or mine defenders. At about 20:00, a TSh-71 "Crab" was killed on a mine, then a TShch-56 "Barometer". The continuity of the swept lane was broken, in the dark it was not possible to shoot all the cut and floated mines, they were pushed away from the sides with poles and hands. Avoiding mines, the ships broke down and were blown up.

In the detachment of the main forces, the S-5 submarine was the first to die, only 9 sailors escaped from it. Then the destroyer Yakov Sverdlov exploded and sank with most of the crew, and the destroyer Proud was severely damaged.

The cover detachment found itself in a critical situation. At about 21:00, out of the five base trawlers that escorted the ships, four broke away from the detachment and joined the main forces. Admiral Panteleev's attempt to return them to their place ended in vain, Admiral Tributs, most of all

preoccupied with the fate of the flagship, he put the stray trawlers in guard of the cruiser "Kirov".

Left without anti-mine support, the ships, one after another, were blown up by mines. The leader of the destroyers "Minsk" and the destroyer "Glorious" were seriously damaged. When trying to take in tow the leader drifting through the minefield, the destroyer "Skory" was killed; the newest ship, which managed to serve only 28 days, broke in half and sank 15 minutes after the explosion in the area of the aft engine room.

The rearguard suffered the heaviest losses, since from the very beginning it followed without anti-mine support. All hope was only for paravanes, which, as it turned out in practice, did not divert mines at low speed, but, on the contrary, pulled them to the side. From 22:00 to 24:00, the old destroyers Kalinin, Artem, Volodarsky, patrol ships Cyclone, Sneg and Topaz were killed by mines from the rearguard.

Convoys also suffered significant losses due to weak anti-mine guards, lack of joint navigation skills with minesweepers and a large number of floating mines. In the first convoy, the explosion tore off the stern of the Shch-301 submarine, 13 crew members were rescued. From the composition of the second convoy, the BT-545 "Everita" quickly sank, which had a garrison from the island of Naisaar, numbering about 1,500 boats. Only 10 people were saved. Died on mines VT-584 "Naysaar" with 2500 thousand people on board.

In the third convoy, the Luga transport, carrying almost one and a half thousand wounded, was blown up and left by the team. Most of them took on board

39

VT-529 "Skrunda", which left Tallinn empty. The transport "Balkhash" died, along with about 2,000 people. In the fourth convoy, the mobilized gunboat I-8 Kronstadt exploded on a mine.

Under these conditions, around midnight, Tributs ordered all ships and vessels to anchor and wait for the sun to rise in order to continue moving east in the morning. The decision, generally correct, was caused solely by ignorance of the situation, since by that time the ships had actually overcome the minefield.

With the onset of dawn, the warships weighed anchor and, leaving the convoys, went to Kronstadt with the maximum possible move. Slow-moving and low-maneuverable, practically unarmed vessels with troops on board were left unguarded. There were no fighters. At 7.15 enemy aircraft appeared above them. The German pilots acted like they were in training, choosing the largest targets. This led to heavy losses, especially in personnel.

Thus, together with the Kalpax transport, which was subjected to 40 air attacks (`), more than 900 people were killed, including 700 wounded soldiers. The boat was picked up from it by only 70 people. Near Rodsher Island, the Ausma transport was killed by air bombs. Six damaged transports sank in the Western

Gogland reach, two transports and the floating workshop "Hammer and Sickle" you rushed to the rocks at the southern tip of Gogland. The Ausma evacuated the Paldiski garrison - 1200 people. The loss of the Hammer and Sickle floating workshop was very tangible. She had the latest equipment for that time and a huge amount of spare parts for ship mechanisms, especially for underwater

loloc.

Detachments of warships arrived in Kronstadt on August 29 at 18:00. On the morning of the 30th, the rest of the surviving ships and vessels arrived. In total, 46 transport ships were lost during the breakthrough.

Separately, we note the fate of the transport "Kazakhstan" on which there were up to 5,000 military personnel and civilians. As a result of an air raid, he lost control and course, drifted for several days in the area of Wainllo Island. But the second assistant to the captain L.N. Zagorulko and the crew members remaining on the ship managed to fix the steering and the car, brought the battered ship to Kronstadt. For this, they were all awarded orders and noted in the order of the Supreme Commander No. 303 as "a group of daredevils selflessly devoted to the Motherland." And the captain of "Kazakhstan" V.S. Kalitaev, thrown overboard by a blast wave and picked up from the water by the ShchSh-322 submarine, arrived at the base a week earlier than his ship, for which he was shot "like a coward and a deserter."

Many years later, he was posthumously awarded the Order of the Red Banner of War.

A detachment of captain 2nd rank Svyatov gathered people from transports in distress and from the islands until September 8!

Former chief of staff of the fleet Yu.A. Panteleev wrote in his memoirs: "All military units that left the battle were put on transports and

40

removed from Tallinn and Paldiski, not a single ship or military unit 6 Tallinn not left."

On August 31, People's Commissar Kuznetsov reported to Stalin that during the breakthrough from Tallinn to Kronstadt, 8 warships, 12 transports and 8 auxiliary vessels were killed, not a single serviceable gun was left to the enemy, not a single unit - everything was either taken out or destroyed. But this is all pure lies. During the evacuation, 68 units were lost: 22 warships and auxiliary vessels (including 5 destroyers, 3 guards, 3 minesweepers, 2 submarines) and 46 transports. In addition, another 28 ships were abandoned or sunk in Tallinn.

In Tallinn, the Germans captured 11,432 Soviet soldiers, captured 293 serviceable guns (144 anti-aircraft, 97 field, 52 anti-tank), 304 machine guns, 91 armored cars, 2 armored trains, 4,000 anchor mines, 3,500 torpedoes, more than 1,000 bombs.

12,738 servicemen and civilians of the Baltic Fleet and the 10th Rifle Corps were delivered to Kronstadt and Oranienbaum, who subsequently joined the defense of Leningrad. Approximately 18,000 died on the crossing. To them must be added members of the crews of 88 ships and vessels that died on the way, at least three thousand people. As for civilians, no one counted them. According to some reports, up to 15 thousand "civilians" settled in the Sula. No more than three or four thousand were saved. Thus, the total number of victims of this massacre is from 30 to 40 thousand people!

With its "unparalleled breakthrough in history", the Baltic Fleet, having lost a total of 106 ships and vessels (together with those lost in Tallinn), as well as at least 35 thousand military personnel (together with those captured), as usual, again "threatened the enemy's plans". True, Stalin at first thought about whether to send the command of the fleet in full force to the tribunal for such dubious achievements? Investigators and prosecutors would prove like two or two that it was the sailors who were to blame not only for the surrender of Tallinn, but also for the defeats of the Red Army on the land front: "Everyone wanted to find the real culprit of our failures, the failure of all our victorious plans and calculations. Even big people did not yet realize that we are experiencing the collapse of some of the provisions of our pre-war doctrine, it was not before! We need a living culprit."

But in the end, he gave up on them.

As Professor of the St. Petersburg Naval Academy V.D. Dotsenko, the general results of the military campaign of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet for the period from June 22 to December 3 were as follows: "By the end of 1941, the fleet in the Baltic practically did not exist" *.

* Dotsenko V.D. Myths and legends of the Russian fleet. Ed. 4th, rev. and additional SPb., 2004, p. 213.

In the language of statistics, it looked like this. During the specified period

41

fleet lost: 1 leader
(Minsk);

16 destroyers (Artem, Volodarsky, Gnevny, Proud, Kalinin, Lenin, Marx, Sverdlov, Angry, Fast, Courageous, Sharp-witted, Stately, Guardian, Harsh, Engels.);

28 submarines (1-1, Lj-2, M-74, M-76, M-78, M-80, M-81, M-83, M-94, M-98, M 99, M- 103, P-1, P-2, S-1, S-3, S-5, S-6, S-8, S-10, S-11, Sh-3Z01, Sh-319, P 1,- 322, Shch-324, Kalev, Ronis, Speedola);

43 minesweepers (T-201 "Charge", T-202 "Buoy", T-203 "Cartridge", T-206 "Verp", T-208 "Pulley", T-209 "Knecht", T-212 "died Headquarters, T-213 Krambol, T-214 Bugel, T-216,

T-297 "Virsaitis", T-299 "Imanta", TShch-32 /Ozernoy/, TShch-36 "Molotov", TShch-41 /Izhorets-12/, TShch-42 /Izhorets-13/, TSh-43 / Izhorets-65/, TShch-48 /Izhorets-33/, TShch 49 /Izhorets-31/, TSh-51 "Serpent", TShch-53, TShch-54 "Kluz", TShch-56 "Barometer", TShch-64 /Izhorets-71/, TShch-67 /Izhorets-53/, TShch-68, TShch-71 "Crab", TShch-73 "Menzhinsky", TShch-74 "Kirov", TShch-76 "Val", TShch-80 /Izhorets-21/, TShch-81 /Izhorets-22/, TShch-85 /Izhorets-29/, TSh-89 Burbot; TSh-101 "Petrozavodsk", TSh-122, TShch-177 "Beluga", TShch-178 "Ulyanov", TShch-238).

In addition, trawlers TShch-82 /Izhorets-23/, TShch-85 /Izhorets-29/, TShch-87 / Izhorets-34/, TShch-89 /Izhorets-83/ fled to Sweden, where they were interned until the end of the war.

5 patrol ships (Storm, Whirlwind, Snow, Topaz, Cyclone); 5 hydrographic ships (Astronomer, Basis, West, Volna, Nord); 3 minelayers (Azimuth, Amur, Surop);

4 gunboats (Krasnaya Gorka, Kronstadt /I-8/, Oranienbaum, Pioneer);

23 torpedo boats (TCA No. 12, 12 (2nd), 13, 21, 24, 27, 34, 42, 47, 52, 64, 71, 72, 74, 88, 91, 102, 103, 114, 123, 131, 141, 151).

25 hunting boats (MO-102, 109, 143, 173, 174, 202, 205, 206, 208, 239, ZO01, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 310, 311, 401, 402, 405, 406, 407, 410, 412).

Some of these ships were later repaired and put back into service, but this did not happen soon. For example, the Minsk leader was ready for action in November 1942. The destroyer "Guarding" was restored only in 1948. Trawler TShch-36 "Molotov", which sank on the Neva on September 20, returned to service at the end of February 1942. Etc.

Received serious damage and for a long time the battleship Marat (no longer entered service), the cruiser Maxim Gorky, the destroyers Grozyashchiy (did not enter service), Strong, Watchtower (commissioned in September 1943), "Terrible" (repaired by October 1942), minelayer "Ristna", dozens

42

other warships and boats, auxiliary vessels, watercraft.

As for transport ships, by the end of 1941, 131 ships were lost only from among those that belonged to the Ministry of the Navy. Of these: 57 ships were captured by the enemy in foreign and Soviet ports; 37 ships were sunk by aviation; 21 ships sank as a result of mine explosions; 16 ships were lost for other reasons. Dozens of ships belonging to other departments were also lost.

43

Chapter 3

(August - early September 1941)

"Finnish Front"

A tense situation developed towards the end of July north of Leningrad. On the Karelian Isthmus, on July 31, the Finnish South-Eastern Army launched a general offensive. It included the 2nd Army Corps (2nd, 15th, 18th Infantry Divisions) Major General Laatikainen, the 4th Army Corps (4th, 8th, 12th Infantry Divisions) Lieutenant General Oesha, 5th Army Corps (10 1st Infantry Division and Cavalry Brigade), in addition, the 11th and 7th Infantry Divisions of the 7th Corps were to attack Sortavala, which soon formed the 1st Army Corps specifically for this purpose under the command of Major General Myakinen.

The Finns were opposed by the 23rd Soviet Army as part of the 19th Rifle Corps (142nd, 115th Rifle Divisions), the 50th Rifle Corps (43rd, 70th, 123rd Rifle Divisions), the 27th (Kexholmsky) and 28th th (Vyborg) fortified areas.

The 23rd Army also included the 24th, 28th, 43rd, 573rd corps artillery regiments, the 101st howitzer artillery regiment, the 108th and 519th howitzer artillery regiments of high power RGK, the 20th separate mortar battalion (48 mortars of 120 mm caliber), 27th and 241st separate anti-aircraft divisions, 198th mechanized division from the 10th mechanized corps.

The aviation attached to the army included the 5th mixed air division, the 41st bomber regiment, the 15th and 19th corrective squadrons.

The Finns delivered the main blow with the 2nd Army Corps in the Kexholm direction with the aim of reaching the western coast of Lake Ladoga, occupying the Hiytola railway junction, cutting off the grouping of Soviet troops in Sortavala from the south and dismembering the 23rd Army. In the future, Mannerheim planned to develop the offensive towards the Vuoksa River, force it and go to the rear of the Vyborg grouping of the Northern Front. In the Vyborg direction, the 4th Army Corps was preparing to join the business.

The 142nd and 115th Soviet divisions, defending on a front of 106 kilometers, could not oppose the enemy's tactics. The Finns infiltrated in separate groups to their rear, went out to communications, disrupted communications, disrupted the supply of ammunition, and blocked strongholds. In general, the battles on the Karelian Isthmus are not covered at all in our history. What, for example, can be gleaned from the collective work "Unconquered Leningrad", except for a number of vague stories about heroism:

"So, the soldiers and officers of the 461st Rifle Regiment of the 142nd Rifle Division of the 23rd Army under the command of Colonel V.A. Trubachev for ten days of fighting on

Karelian Isthmus destroyed almost half (?) of the enemy soldiers advancing on them. For courage and courage, Colonel V.A. Trubachev and machine gunner A.I. Zakhodsky were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Half is how much? And what was the "whole"? What were our losses?

On August 5, the 198th mechanized and 142nd rifle divisions tried to launch a counterattack, but suffered heavy losses and retreated to their original lines. On August 6, the Finns - apparently, with the forces of the "not destroyed half" - continued the offensive and by the end of August 9 they reached the Lakhdenpokhya - Kurkiyoki - Hiytola region, that is, to Ladoga. As a result, the right flank of the 23rd Army was divided into three groupings isolated from each other and pressed against Lake Ladoga. Their total number was about 40 thousand commanders and Red Army soldiers.

The first group, surrounded to the north and northwest of Lahdenpokhya, was a "mixture" of units of the 23rd and 7th armies (regiments of the 168th, 71st, 115th rifle divisions). The second group (142nd Rifle and 198th Mechanized Divisions) ended up in the area north and northeast of Khyitol. The consolidated group of border guards under the command of Colonel S.I. Donskoy was surrounded west of Kexholm.

The Ladoga military flotilla came to the aid of these units. The order to create it on the basis of the VMUZ Training Detachment was signed on the third day of the war. The flotilla included 8 gunboats (six of them are armed dirt scows), 10 trawlers (mobilized river tugs), 5 armored boats (BKA Nos. 97, 98, 99, 100, 102) and 8 hunter boats. From August 12 to 22, the LVF ships evacuated the troops of the 142nd Rifle and 198th Mechanized Divisions to the area of the old Soviet-Finnish border. Parts of the 168th division were first transferred to the nearby island of Valaam, and then to the Kolpino area.

The evacuation was covered by their fire gunboats "Bira", "Bureya", "Olekma", "Selemdzha", "Sheksna", two trawlers and ten boats. In total, 26 thousand fighters, 155 guns, up to 800 vehicles and tractors were taken out of isolated bridgeheads in ten days. It is difficult to say exactly who led the naval part of the operation, since in August the flotilla had three commanders.

To prevent further advance of the enemy in the southeast direction, the commander of the 23rd Army, Lieutenant General M.N. Gerasimov threw the 265th Rifle Division, which had arrived from the Stavka reserve, into the gap.

On August 10, the Finns repulsed the Soviet counterattack at Hiitola and the next day resumed the offensive throughout the Karelian Isthmus. The 4th Army Corps began active hostilities against the Vyborg group. To her rear

having crossed Vuoksa, the 2nd Army Corps left. Now the threat of encirclement hung over the three divisions of the left wing of the 23rd Army. August 16 7th similar

45

Colonel Swenson's division took Sortavala. In general, the Finns competently beat the "Reds" in parts, and they "heroically repelled the offensive of the enemy troops outnumbered."

On August 20, Soviet troops on the left flank began to retreat to the former Mannerheim Line, simultaneously blowing up fortifications, rolling up and evacuating coastal defense units. Batteries on the islands of the Vyborg Bay, ships of the skerry detached ships and the destroyers "Strong" and "Stoyky" sent to help covered the withdrawal of troops with their fire and repelled enemy landings. For operations on the coastal sector of the front, a combined regiment of sailors was created.

However, the planned withdrawal did not work. On August 24, the Finns landed one regiment south of Vyborg and cut off the coastal railway and the highway leading to Leningrad. The attempt to destroy the landing was not successful. The Vyborg grouping of Soviet troops was outflanked from the south and southeast; The 43rd Red Banner, 115th, 123rd and 265th rifle divisions were surrounded. With the help of a combined regiment of sailors, separate units, having lost all tanks and most of the artillery, made their way to the Gulf of Finland in the Koivisto area.

Here, with the support of coastal batteries from the islands of the Bjork archipelago, they held a bridgehead for several days. On August 31, their evacuation to Leningrad began, for which ships and barges were allocated. In total, the fleet took out 27 thousand soldiers and commanders, 188 artillery pieces, 950 vehicles.

Stalin's dissatisfaction with the actions of the command of the Leningrad Front, which requested permission to regroup forces, was expressed in the requirements of the Headquarters of August 28: "Your today's ideas resemble blackmail. You are being intimidated by the commanders of the armies, and you, in turn, apparently decided to intimidate the Headquarters with all sorts of horrors about breakthroughs, aggravation of the situation, and so on. Of course, if you do nothing to demand from your subordinates, but are only an extra passing on the complaints of the armies, you will then, in a few days, have to surrender Leningrad, but the Headquarters does not exist in order to indulge in blackmailing demands and assumptions .

The Headquarters permits you to withdraw units from the Vyborg Line, but at the same time the Headquarters orders you that under no circumstances should the units leave the prepared line of the Mannerheim Line. The bet forbids you to expose the Luga Bay and give it to your opponent. Even if the 8th Army has to retreat a little, it must still cover the Luga Bay along with the peninsula at all costs.

The Headquarters demands that you finally stop being an extra and a retreat specialist and enter your proper role of commander, inspiring the army and raising the morale of the troops.

Two and a half hours later, the Military Council of the 23rd Army received "valuable instructions" from the Military Council of the Front:

"A characteristic feature in your leadership of the army, the Military Council of the Front notes the ignorance of the situation, the lack of accurate data about the enemy and

46

the position of their troops, uncertainty in actions and unsteady command and control of troops. You cover up all this with talk about taking measures, about the absence of reserves, and, as a conclusion from all this, you turn to the Military Council of the front for permission to withdraw army troops to the old state border.

Defensive operation of the 23rd Army on the Karelian Isthmus (July - September 1941)

Your defeatist statement about the withdrawal of troops to the old state border sounds strange and monstrous. In this decision, you show instability that borders on cowardice, and instead of mobilizing your will and the will of your subordinate troops to the fight for Leningrad, you succumb to the will of an insolent enemy.

The Military Council demands to stop being specialists in retreat, it demands from you and the member of the Military Council to truly stand at the head of the army, to break these retreat moods in yourself, to truly, in a Bolshevik way, take up raising the spirit and will of the subordinate troops to defend Leningrad.

While the Red generals were gathering their Bolshevik will into a fist, the Finns took Vyborg and Kivenen on August 29, Raivola on August 30, and Terioki on August 31.

Under the onslaught of the enemy, the retreat of the Soviet divisions that did not fall into the "cauldrons" turned into a flight, during which units and formations lost almost all weapons and military equipment. For example, the 198th Mechanized Division, Major General V.V. Kryukova retained only 6 heavy machine guns from her entire arsenal.

The Soviet propaganda explained the outright defeat on the Finnish front by the "huge numerical superiority of the enemy" and the fact that "selected Nazi troops" fought on the side of the Finns. The August battles on the Karelian Isthmus were described in the newspapers approximately in the following vein: "In the gun

there were few soldiers left in the calculations. The junior lieutenant commanded the battle and at the same time fired himself, alternately from two cannons. The Nazis offered the gunners to surrender, promising to save their lives. Volleys rang out in response.

The Nazis retreated from the battery in superstitious horror ... Kokorin was losing his last strength when a hefty fascist officer (?)

knocked him down and fell with all the weight of his body: "Surrender, Russ"! "No matter how!" shouted Kokorin and pulled out the grenade ring. The hero-orderly died undefeated.

(After the war, Soviet historians through painstaking research

found that the border guard medical instructor actually shouted: "Chekists do not surrender!". See "History of the Leningrad Military District"). By decision

of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front, adopted on September 1, the 23rd Army, commanded by Major General A.I. Cherepanov, occupied the line of the Karelian fortified area (No. 22), which passed along the border of 1939, from the Gulf of Finland along the Sestra River to Lake Ladoga. Regarding the further course of events, the opinions of the chroniclers differ. The Soviet version is:

"During September, the 23rd Army, in cooperation with the Red Banner

47

The Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga military flotilla repelled all attempts by the Finnish troops to break through our defenses at the turn of the Karelian fortified region and, having inflicted heavy damage on the enemy, forced him to go on the defensive. Having entrenched themselves on this line, the Soviet troops successfully repulsed enemy attacks. The plan of the fascist German and Finnish command to break through the Karelian Isthmus with a strike to Leningrad and, together with the troops of the Army Group North, to seize it collapsed.

It is not difficult to disrupt the actions of the enemy, which he did not intend to take. This was the only thing the utterly defeated 23rd Army was capable of. The Finns did not plan to "take over" Leningrad at all, neither together with the Germans, nor without them. True, in August and September, first Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel (1882-1946), then Chief of Staff of the Wehrmacht Supreme High Command General Alfred Jodl (1899-1946), twice turned to the Finnish leadership with proposals to take part "in this enterprise", but Both times they were rebuffed. General Halder also wrote about this in his diary:

"The command of the Finnish army does not want its troops to advance from the Karelian Isthmus beyond the old state border."

Marshal Mannerheim, REMEMBERING THE LIMITED HUMAN
POTENTIAL OF THE COUNTRY, sought to save the lives of his soldiers. Attack

Leningrad, in a situation where the outcome of the world conflict was still vague and the winner was not determined, seemed unprofitable from a political point of view.

The diplomatic pressure exerted on Helsinki at the request of the Kremlin also played a certain role. In early September, the British Prime Minister told Stalin:

"We will put every possible pressure on Finland, including an immediate declaration that we will declare war on her if she advances beyond the old borders. We ask the United States to take all necessary steps to influence Finland."

The Finns themselves quite deliberately distanced themselves from the Germans, demonstrating to the world that they were waging their own just war with the Soviets. (This position justified itself in the future: unlike other allies of the "thousand-year" Reich that collapsed in 1945, who were imprisoned in the "socialist camp", Finland was not occupied and retained its independence).

That is the only reason why the troops of General Cherepanov, reinforced by the 265th and 291st rifle divisions, successfully "repulsed all attacks" of the enemy who had gone over to the defensive. The front on the Karelian Isthmus stabilized until June 1944.

"German Front"

The High Command of the Wehrmacht all this time was planning a new

48

attack on Leningrad, knowing full well that time is working for the Russians. However, due to difficulties in supply and in the implementation of the regrouping of forces, the dates were pushed back six times. Back in mid-July, the command of Army Group North came to the conclusion that the available forces were not enough to capture Leningrad on the move. Therefore, it assumed at first to take possession of the Novgorod-Narva line.

But even this operation, according to Leeb, could not be started until the 16th Army had completed the defeat of the Soviet troops near Nevel and reliably secured its right flank, and the 18th Army had brought up infantry divisions. Hitler, by directive No. 33 of July 19, approved this decision, but he was unnerved by the delays and the uncertainty of the situation on the flanks of the Soviet-German front. On July 21, he himself flew to Leeb's headquarters and demanded that the field marshal take the city as soon as possible and destroy the Baltic Fleet.

At this meeting, Hitler declared that Leningrad was the "cradle of the revolution" and Moscow was only a "geographical concept." "The Führer attaches no importance to the capture of Moscow," Halder wrote.

In addition, the Führer considered it very important not to give the Soviet command the opportunity to withdraw troops from Leningrad in order to use them in other directions. Therefore, he insisted on concentrating the main efforts of Army Group North in the direction of Novgorod - Lake Ladoga to intercept the main

communications and demanded that the 3rd tank group of General Hoth be brought here, which, at that time, was fighting northeast of Smolensk. Von Leeb agreed with the Fuhrer, but insisted that the Novgorod direction was unsuitable for tank formations.

Hitler then repeated his ideas to the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch (1881-1948), identifying Leningrad - the "bastion of Bolshevism", the most important industrial center and base for dominance in the Baltic - as the first immediate goal of the offensive of the Wehrmacht. Both Brauchitsch and his chief of staff, General Halder, agreed with the Fuhrer, but categorically objected to the transfer of the 3rd Panzer Group and the weakening of the onslaught in the Moscow direction.

Nevertheless, on July 23, Hitler signed an "addition to Directive No. 33", in which he ordered the 3rd Panzer Group to be temporarily subordinated to Army Group North with the task of "ensuring the right flank of the latter and encircling the enemy in the Leningrad region." Halder, in fact sabotaging this, in his opinion, "meaningless order", informed Leeb on July 25 that he would receive Gotha's divisions, but not earlier than August 5; three days later, that deadline was pushed back to 15 August.

The specific task of Army Group North was set in OKW Directive No. 34 of July 30, which canceled the previous one. The directive ordered Field Marshal Leeb to clear Estonia of the enemy, continue the offensive on Leningrad, delivering the main blow between Lake Ilmen and the Narva River, and establish contact with the Finnish army. To support Leeb, the 8th Aviation Corps was allocated from Army Group Center.

49

In addition to the directive, the headquarters emphasized that it was necessary to complete the operation against Leningrad "before the start of the offensive in the Moscow direction." The German command sought to "finish" Leningrad as soon as possible, to which it remained to go 100 km, in order to then attack Moscow with all its might. On August 4, at the headquarters of Army Group Center, the Fuhrer announced that, according to his calculations, the task of capturing Leningrad would be completed by August 20, and the transfer of Panzer Group Gotha to the north "is no longer necessary."

Defensive operation in the Krasnogvardeisky direction (August 8-21, 1941) The mood of General Halder changed from rosy to gloomy and back:

"August 2. The commander-in-chief was at a meeting in the army group. After his visit, I lost the last signs of a clear understanding of what was happening. The army group did not achieve any success in the offensive ...

11th August. Our last forces are thrown into the battle. Each new regrouping within the army groups requires us to exert extreme strain and unproductive expenditure of human forces and technical resources. All this causes nervousness and discontent among the command and an ever-increasing tendency to interfere in all details. Any intervention in the details, which in this case is by no means an order (!), but wishes and recommendations, is naturally associated with great danger.

We do not know the specific conditions under which events develop. When they develop more slowly than we want, then we immediately think of insufficient desire and zeal, or even malicious arbitrariness on the ground ... The general situation shows more and more clearly that the colossus-Russia, which deliberately prepared for war, despite the difficulties inherent in countries with a totalitarian regime were underestimated by us ...

12th of August. Army Group North: The troops continue to advance successfully "... The English military historian Alan Clark very accurately noted:

"Halder's reaction was typical of all the Germans, faced face to face with the extraordinary extravagance of the Russians in battle. In the beginning, the German was delighted: he counted the heads of the enemies, measured the miles traveled, compared them with his achievements in the West and came to the conclusion that victory was already around the corner. Then distrust: such reckless spending cannot continue, the Russians, no doubt, take it to the gun, in a few days the days will run out of steam. Then some kind of aching tripod: an endless, aimless repetition of counterattacks, the desire to give ten Russian lives for one German one, the immensity of the territory, its cloudy horizon.

The military councils of the North-Western Direction and the Northern Front took urgent measures to strengthen the near approaches to Leningrad and reinforce the troops defending there. On July 23, the Luga operational group was divided into three independent sections - Kingiseppsky, Luga

50

and eastern, with their subordination directly to the front.

The Kingisepp section of defense was headed by Major General V.V. Semashko, who received the task of preventing the enemy from breaking through from the south along the Gdovskoye highway to Narva and through Kingisepp to Leningrad. Its section included: 90th, 118th and 191st rifle divisions, 2nd and 4th divisions of the people's militia, coastal defense units of the Baltic Fleet, 14th anti-tank artillery brigade, armored train No. 60, 519th howitzer artillery regiment RGK, cadets of the infantry school named after SM. Kirov and training tank regiment.

Luga section of Major General A.N. Astanin, covering the roads to Leningrad from the southwest, included the 111th, 177th and 235th rifle, 24th tank divisions, the 1st regiment of the 3rd division of the people's militia, a regiment of artillery courses for improving command personnel, 260th and 262nd machine-gun artillery battalions, division of the Leningrad Artillery School.

In the eastern sector of defense, Major General F.N. Starikov included the 70th, 237th, 128th rifle and 21st tank divisions, the 1st division of the people's militia, the 1st mountain rifle brigade, the 261st and 263rd machine-gun battalions.

On July 10, the installation of sea coastal batteries began in the land defense system of Leningrad. Tens of thousands of sailors were transferred ashore to the marine rifle brigades, which then joined the army formations.

From its reserve for the defense of Leningrad, the Headquarters - the Supreme High Command transferred the 265th, 268th, 272nd and 291st rifle divisions to the Northern Front. On July 31, the eastern section was transformed into the Novgorod Army Group, and on August 4, into the 48th Army of the North-Western Front under the command of Lieutenant General S.D. Akimov.

With great effort, but without a single plan, without taking into account the nature of the terrain and without linking with neighboring areas, under the leadership of random people, the construction of field-type fortified areas was carried out, in particular Krasnogvardeisky - one of the most important defense links. All these measures were initially based on the cordon principle, which made the Soviet defense ineffective.

For two years, watching the actions of the Wehrmacht in Europe, the Soviet generals did not understand anything. They evenly distributed forces and assets along the entire front, although the roads that allowed the use of mobile units could be counted on the fingers of one hand, did not have operational reserves in depth, and ignored engineering support and troop training. Women dug ditches and trenches, but the soldiers were not taught this; they did not have a entrenching tool, and the Soviet charters did not provide for "defencism".

The war was considered a simple matter: an attack, the defeat of the enemy, a meal, a Komsomol meeting or a rally.

In the igoga, "comrades in command", who arrived at the end of July to check

51

the state of the fortifications established that the trenches were dug with an incomplete profile, wire barriers were placed in the wrong areas, firing positions for artillery and machine guns were chosen unsuccessfully, and "the equipment of the strip with explosive barriers is of an accidental nature."

In addition, the Headquarters planned to organize a counteroffensive by August 3-4, the purpose of which was to defeat the enemy with strikes from Staraya Russa and from the Luga line, access to the Velikaya River, and return Pskov and Ostrop. Then the deadline was moved to August 12.

The Germans started four days earlier (they didn't take into account, scoundrels, that just at that time the Pravda newspaper published a series of materials that authoritatively proved that "the collapse of the Wehrmacht is inevitable in the near future"). On August 8, Reinhardt's 41st motorized corps, supported by the 1st Infantry Division of the 38th Army Corps, went on the offensive from the bridgehead on the Luga River in the direction of Krasno-gvardeysk.

Although the adversary attacked from the bridgeheads, on which he accumulated strength for four weeks, only the 90th rifle and 2nd division of the people's militia opposed him in this sector. The rest of the formations of General Semashko's group were inactive, waiting for their turn to get hit in the face.

On August 10, near Luga, Manstein struck, in whose subordination, after all the regroupings, the 3rd Motorized, 269th Infantry and Police Division of the SS, which consisted, according to the Pravda newspaper, consisted of "the watchdogs of bloody Hitler." Hoepner took the 8th Panzer Division at his disposal and used it to "clean up" the rear.

The Soviet troops repulsed the enemy's attempts to overcome the Kingisepp sector and the defense near Luga on the move. According to the Germans, the fighting here was heavy and cost them significant losses. In particular, the SS division, which launched a full-length psychic attack, with deployed standards, lost up to 2000 purebred Aryans killed and wounded. The division commander, General Mülferstedt, who staged this idiotic performance, also died. In addition, the Kingisepp group, General M.M. Popov reinforced with two more divisions - the 1st Red Banner Tank Division (370 tanks, of course, "obsolete", and 53 armored vehicles) and the 1st Guards Division of LANO.

However, on August 12, on the southern flank of the Luga line, two army corps of the 16th Army of General Bush and the SS division "Dead Head" attached to them, after a three-day battle, rammed the defenses of the newly formed 48th Army in the Shimsk area and rushed to Novgorod. The Soviet units, disorganized by the strikes of the 8th Luftwaffe Air Corps and suffering heavy losses, began to withdraw to the north and were later transferred to the Northern Front.

All attempts by General Akimov to organize a counterattack from the Batetskaya station to the flank of the Germans by the forces of the 70th, 237th rifle divisions and the 1st division of the people's militia failed. With the entry of the enemy to the railway line

52

Leningrad - Dno was cut off from the main forces and the Kirov division of the people's militia was almost completely killed.

The defeat in the Novgorod direction was due not so much to German superiority in forces as to defects in the organization of defense. Five Soviet divisions and one brigade held a 60 km front against seven enemy divisions. According to pre-war views, a rifle division could firmly defend a strip 10 km wide. So this was a completely acceptable balance of power for the defending side, if it knew how to defend itself, or at least dig in.

In fact, the Soviet positions were poorly equipped with trenches, dugouts and communications. For the entire army there were only 705 rifle (' and 328 machine-gun cells. Wire and minefields were almost never used. Perhaps they were not enough, but nothing can explain the complete neglect of camouflage and reconnaissance. There were no cut-off positions, firing points were used exclusively in the fire system frontal - action.

The troops did not defend the anti-tank ditches, so the German tanks easily overcame them (the Germans had practically no tanks in this direction, but this remark applies to almost all the ditches dug by the "laughing women"). A few fortifications were created without taking into account the possibility of using fire weapons and the interaction of military branches. However, there was no interaction.

This is how the main line of defense looked like, it is the only one. The Soviet divisions were located in two echelons, but the second echelon had no equipped positions at all. And besides, the command of the 48th Army, in accordance with the directives of the Headquarters, all the previous days was preparing not to defend the advantageous natural line along the Shelon and Mshaga rivers, but to an offensive operation to defeat the enemy in the Soltsy-Dno area.

On the night of August 19, two German divisions of the 28th Corps of General Viktorin, having made their way through the forests and swamps, reached the Oredezh station, entering the rear of the Luga operational group. The defeated units of the 237th Infantry Division fled in panic, not accepting the battle. South of Lake Ilmen, General Hansen's 10th Army Corps stormed Staraya Russa. The battles for the city, according to the German historian Paul Karel, flared up fierce:

"Young Leningrad workers, who had never been on the front line before, together with the shelled soldiers of the units of the Soviet 11th Army, put up stubborn resistance, repelling German attacks in hand-to-hand combat. Every meter of land was taken with a fight, everything was used - rifle butts, bayonets, shovels, pistols and flamethrowers. Soviet tanks dug into the ground, firing machine guns and heavy artillery shells, eventually forced the Germans to stop.

However, four days later, units of the 10th Corps took the city and went to the Lovat River, thereby covering the right flank of Army Group North.

In this situation, Marshal Voroshilov on August 12 carried out a sudden counterattack near Staraya Russa with the forces of the 11th Army and the 34th Army, which arrived from the reserve.

53

Army Major General K.M. Kachanova. The latter included 6 divisions (245th, 254th, 257th, 262nd rifle, 25th and 54th cavalry), 264th and 644th corps artillery regiments, 171st and 759th anti-tank artillery regiments, armored trains No. 16 and 59. In addition, at the expense of the front, the army was reinforced with the 181st rifle division, the 270th and 264th corps artillery regiments, a rocket launcher division and a separate tank battalion.

Since the troops of the two Soviet armies were opposed only by three German divisions (30th, 290th and 126th infantry), the offensive was successful at first. In three days, the 34th Army, supported by long-range bomber and front-line aviation, advanced 60 km and, pushing the enemy's 10th Army Corps to Lake Ilmen, began to threaten the rear of the entire German Novgorod group. However, this did not prevent the divisions of the 1st Army Corps from occupying Novgorod on August 15, and Chudovo on August 20, cutting off the railway linking Leningrad with Moscow.

However, under the impression of the Voroshilov strike, Hitler ordered to immediately remove one motorized corps from the 3rd Panzer Group from the Moscow direction and transfer it to Army Group North, which plunged General Hoth into deep grief, who believed that "the corps was used in the wrong place, where the outcome of operations was decided.

In the north, after four days of fierce fighting, the 1st Panzer Division managed to find a weak spot in the Soviet defense. Reinhardt sent the 6th Panzer and 1st Infantry Divisions into the resulting breakthrough. Tula Hoepner ordered the transfer of the 8th Panzer. On August 16, the Soviet units left Kingisepp. The 1st and 8th tank divisions of the enemy moved to Krasnogvardisk, and the 6th tank, 36th motorized and 1st infantry divisions reached the Leningrad-Narva highway.

To avoid encirclement, the 8th Army of Lieutenant General Pyotr Stepanovich Pshennikov (1895-1941) had to hastily leave the territory of Estonia and retreat to the Kopor plateau. Army communications from strikes from the south were provided by the 281st rifle, 2nd division of the people's militia and cadets of the Novo-Peterhof border military-political school of the NKVD named after K.E. Voroshilov (out of 700 people of the cadet battalion, after a month and a half, 72 survived, and they were handed lieutenant "kubari").

Sergeant SI wrote about the state of affairs in the 8th Army from the hospital "personally to Comrade Stalin". Shilov: "On the Estonian sector of the front, hostilities are taking place in a panic mood. Most of the commanders run away from the front line to the rear. The soldiers will look: there is no company commander and commander of the 6th platoon - and 86 retreat in panic.

The command of the companies and 6360dov will move away from the front line of fire by 600-700 meters, and when the soldiers behind them rush to run and reach them, the commanders order the soldiers to return back, but the soldiers themselves do not lead forward. The commanders of 6 platoons 6 this time carry out mass executions of fighters, and the enemy takes advantage of this moment ...

54

There are disputes among the command over who to lead the fighters on the attack, orders are delegated to the higher authorities to one another, and the order reaches the junior command staff and fighters ... The division was defeated due to the fact that communications with neighbors worked very poorly and could not maneuver on others in a timely manner positions. There are great turmoils between the commanding staff, killings among themselves during disputes, and there are a number of cases when soldiers are shot who retreat in panic, seeing that their commanders are running away. A lot of outrages are still happening, about which you can't write everything, and all the blame falls on the fighters, that is, as the proverb says, the switchman is to blame "...

The ships of the isolated Peipsi flotilla had been abandoned earlier by the escaped teams. Subsequently, the enemy actively exploited them for military transportation. In the official history of the fleet, this story is stated, of course,

more heroically: "In connection with the withdrawal of Soviet troops to Leningrad, the ships of the Chudskaya flotilla were flooded by order of the command, and the crews fought their way to the area of the city of Narva."

The counterattacks undertaken by units of the 8th Army and the Kingisepp Group in order to throw the enemy away from the highway and the Leningrad-Narva railway line and the Krasnogvardeysk-Kingisepp railway did not produce results, except for the fact that the 4th DNO was surrounded.

By August 19, all three tank divisions of Reinhardt reached the Krasnogvardeisky fortified area, which managed to occupy parts of the 1st tank, 2nd and 3rd guard divisions of the people's militia, and after them - the 291st rifle division. Here, to fight tanks, 150 anti-aircraft guns were installed, allocated from the 2nd Air Defense Corps. Defensive battles began on the near approaches to the city. It was here that a unique result was recorded these days, achieved by Senior Lieutenant Z3.G. Kolobanov: at the Voiskovitsy state farm, in his design bureau, acting from an ambush, he knocked out 22 German tanks.

In the central sector, fighting with two enemy infantry divisions, the Astanin task force continued to hold the Luga line with open flanks - in fact, in a "bag". At this time, she had 45 thousand people, 97 serviceable tanks and 38 armored vehicles, 355 guns, 140 mortars, 930 machine guns. After analyzing the current situation, the headquarters of the Northern Front on August 19 reported to the commander-in-chief:

"The enemy, with forces of up to two divisions, holding down our grouping in the Luga direction, with the forces of five infantry divisions, two motorized divisions, two or three tank divisions, is developing an offensive against Krasnogvardeisk, Krasnoye Selo and from the Volosovo region to the Siverskaya station with the goal - in cooperation with the grouping in near the Batetskaya station - to surround our Luga grouping for the further development of the offensive in the direction of Leningrad.

But Voroshilov considered these conclusions panicky and did not take any measures to regroup the troops. Well, the very next day, Reinhardt cut the Luga Highway south of Krasnogvardeysk. But Voroshilov and Zhdanov, not daring to ask Stalin for permission to leave the Luga, continued to wait for everything to "dissolve by itself" - the enemy will finally run out of steam from day to day.

55

Only on the morning of August 22, General Astanin received a directive to withdraw his divisions "to a line prepared in advance", while the group's troops were ordered to destroy the Reinhardt corps south of Krasnogvarleisk as the immediate task! Having posted the rearguards, the commander led the group, renamed the South, along the railway to the north. And on August 24, the Germans entered Luga.

To overcome the crisis south of Lake Ilmen, Field Marshal Leeb transferred the 3rd motorized division and the SS division "Dead Head" to Staraya Russa from the Luga and from the Novgorod direction, uniting them under the command of General Manstein and his headquarters.

The headquarters of the 50th army corps of General Georg Lindemann arrived from Smolensk to replace the 56th motorized corps in the Luga region, uniting the 269th infantry division and the SS police division. At the same time, the German command hastily transferred through Vilnius to the old Russian direction the 39th motorized corps of General Schmidt as part of the 12th tank division (96 tanks), the 18th and 20th motorized divisions.

From August 19 to 22, two of Manstein's motorized divisions suddenly hit the open flank and rear of General Kachanov's 34th Army and, in cooperation with Hansen's infantry divisions, utterly defeated the Soviet troops, driving them back across the Lovat River. At the same time, the 34th Army actually fled from the battlefield, having lost about 60% of its personnel and over 80% of military equipment by August 25, some of the formations were surrounded. Manstein reports that his corps alone captured 12,000

prisoners, 141 tanks, 246 guns and a particularly valuable trophy - a secret BM-13 * rocket launcher.

* For many years, Soviet propaganda told stories about how "selected groups of Nazi agents" throughout the war unsuccessfully tried to capture at least one such installation.

General Sobennikov for the failure of the operation, the loss of Novgorod and poor command and control of the troops was immediately removed from the post of front commander.

His place was taken by Lieutenant General Pavel Alekseevich Kurochkin (1900-1989). Sobennikov was first given an army, but then he was relieved of his post. In October, a criminal case was opened against him and he was sentenced to five years in prison. The Presidium of the Supreme Council pardoned him and again sent him to the front, depriving him of his general rank and awards. He fought as deputy commander of the army and again rose to the rank of general.

Commander-34, Major General K.M. Kachanov, "who served in the Red Army from the day it was organized," the former chief military adviser in Republican Spain, was less fortunate. In September, after his army failed to implement another fantastic plan of the Headquarters and was again surrounded, he was arrested by order of the authorized GKO army commissar of the 1st rank L.3. Mehlis*. Following this, the military tribunal of the North-Western Front sentenced him to death, with a stunning wording - "for

56

unauthorized abandonment of the battlefield!

* Lev Zakharovich Mehlis (1889-1953) since 1918 was a political worker (commissar) in Red Army. In 1930 he graduated from the Institute of Red Professors, for which he received the ironic nickname "Professor". In 1938, Stalin appointed him

head of Glavpur (the main political department of the Red Army), conferring on him the title of army commissar of the 1st rank. Since 1940, he was also the People's Commissar of State Control. One of the bloodiest Stalinist executioners.

On August 20, with the aim of "special organization of the working community," the Military Council of the Defense of Leningrad was formed, consisting of L.M. Antyufeeva, Ya.F. Kapustina, A.A. Kuznetsova, P.S. Popkov and A.I. Saturday. After a tough conversation with Stalin, who accused the military-political leadership of the city of political short-sightedness, amateurism and irresponsibility, Zhdanov and Voroshilov also entered this Council.

This neoplasm existed for only ten days. The most outstanding document born in its bowels was the resolution on the formation of 150 militia battalions of 600 people each "from among the working people", including women and teenagers, for street fighting. These 90,000 soldiers were supposed to be armed with rifles, hunting rifles, bottles of combustible mixture, as well as sabers, daggers and lances, which the workers themselves were supposed to produce in excess of the planned output.

On the same days, at a meeting of city party activists, Voroshilov said: "We have a lot of artillery. Not only will we not let the enemy in Leningrad, but we will split him here. Leningrad will be his grave."

In order to improve the command and control of troops in the North-Western direction, on August 23 the State Defense Committee decided to divide the Northern Front into two: Leningrad, under the command of Lieutenant General M.M. Popov, and Karelsky, which was headed by Lieutenant General Valerian Alexandrovich Frolov (1895-1961).

On August 26, a commission of the PC of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the State Defense Committee arrived in Leningrad, consisting of V.M. Molotov, G.M. Malenkova, N.G. Kuznetsova, A.N. Kosygin, P.F. Zhigarev and N.N. Voronova. The mandate given to her allowed, on behalf of the State Defense Committee, to resolve all issues of city defense and the evacuation of enterprises and the population. The commission, after working for ten days, adopted a number of important decisions, most of which remained only on paper due to the rapidly changing situation.

On August 25, the enemy, having concentrated units of the 1st and 28th Army and 39th Motorized Corps in the Chudovo-Kremeno region, easily scattered the defenses of the 48th Army (which, after all the disorderly and disorganized counterattacks at random, turned, in essence, into an incompetent incomplete division), threw back the Soviet units to the north and began to rapidly develop the offensive along the railway and the Moscow-Leningrad highway. Already by 15.00 the Germans captured Luban. From here, the 12th Panzer, 121st and 122nd Infantry Divisions, without encountering resistance, moved to Tosno, the 20th Motorized Division acted in the direction of the Mga station, the 18th Motorized Division - to Kirishi.

The next day, Stalin allowed the Leningrad Front to keep

four-day tank production of the Leningrad factories, demanded to mine the Moscow highway and at the same time "at any cost and by any means" to clear Lyuban and Chudovo from the enemy.

At the end of the conversation, doubting the ability of the commander-in-chief of the direction to understand the situation, the Supreme Commander asked General M.M. Popova: "Answer briefly, does Klim help or hinder?" Meanwhile, Klim-batyr, the brave hero of the war (this is how the Kazakh akyn Dzhambul, the author of a wonderful compliment to Stalin - "lucky bearer") simply did not believe that the enemy could come to Leningrad from the east.

On August 28, the Germans captured Tosno and Sablino, units of the 4th Panzer Group connected with the troops of the 16th Army near the Sluditsy station, closing the ring around the Southern Group of Forces. General Astanin, who had been successfully trying to break through the German barriers for the third day without success, read with bewilderment the new combat order of the front headquarters, written in the spirit of the commissar appeals of the Civil War: "The enemy, having occupied small parts of Kuznetsov, Bekovo, the village of Dibvensky, Novinka, creates the appearance of surrounding your Troop groups. We are sure that the impudence and arrogance of the presumptuous enemy will not make an impression on the fighters and commanders of the Luga group and on its glorious leaders, who honorably fulfilled their duty to the Motherland near Luga. We are also confident that the task of regrouping the Troops will be carried out swiftly and with honor. On August 28, 1941, I order to CRUSH THE ENEMY In the Ostrov, Bekovo, Kuznetsovo area and advance in the 6th Siverskaya, Vyra area.

On August 29, the impudent enemy captured Kirishi and came close to Kolpino, on the 30th he went to the Neva in the area of the village of Ivanovsky. There were only a few kilometers to Leningrad. In a telegram sent to Molotov, Stalin did not hide his irritation: "It was just reported that Tosno had been taken by the enemy. If this continues, I'm afraid that Leningrad will be surrendered STUPIDLY STUPIDLY, and ALL LENINGRAD DIVISIONS RISK TO BE CAPTIVED. What are Popov and Voroshilov doing?.. Where do they get such an abyss of passivity and purely rural obedience to fate? WHAT FOR PEOPLE - I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING.

In Leningrad there are now many KV tanks, a lot of aviation, etc ... Why is the rich Leningrad technology not used in this decisive sector? Don't you think that someone is deliberately opening the way for the Germans in this decisive sector? What kind of person is Popov? What, in fact, is Voroshilov busy with and how is his assistance to Leningrad expressed? I am writing about this because I am very alarmed by the incomprehensible inaction of the Leningrad command."

On August 31, motorized units of the enemy captured Mga, where the last two railways connecting Leningrad with the country converged, and, having reached the Neva, advanced along the eastern bank of the river to Shlisselburg. They were not expected here, there were no defensive structures or regular troops in this sector.

The Germans were blocked by the 1st division of the NKVD, Colonel

Sl. Donskoy (6000 people), reinforced by two tank companies, and a mountain rifle brigade (800 people). On August 31, the 4th division of the people's militia, which had barely emerged from the encirclement, was thrown to the line of the Tosna River on August 31. To the south of Kolpino, the working battalion of the Izhora plant and the 84th separate tank battalion (21 KV tanks, 15 T-50 vehicles) advanced. On the same day, the 4th DNO received a combat order: "Concentrate on the 8th district of the northern outskirts of Kolpino, art. Pontoon WITH THE OBJECTIVE TO ADVANCE in order to destroy the opposing enemy and capture Ivanovskoye, Pokrovskoye by the end of 31. 8.41.

From Slutsk, the 168th Rifle Division of Colonel A.L., who arrived from Karelia, went over to the counterattack on Tosno. Bondarev (7000 people), which entered into a head-on battle with the 121st infantry division of the enemy. At the same time, parts of the 90th Infantry Division, Colonel A.A. Darina made an attempt to break through the Siverskaya to connect with the Southern Group of Forces.

Everyone attacked again, putting into practice the categorical demand of the "leader of progressive mankind" to free Chudovo and Lyuban. At the same time, the command of the Lenfront knew perfectly well that the "presumptuous enemy" did not have any numerical superiority, it "acts with insignificant forces on areas that are separated from each other and do not have tactical elbow interaction", its communications are stretched, which means that it is possible and necessary to beat him in parts. But in practice, for some reason, the red commanders did not succeed. The German regiments "impudently and impudently" continued to overturn and crumble Soviet divisions and armies into cabbage. And this is not an exaggeration, but literal quotes from reports and orders: "The enemy UP TO THE INFANTRY REGIMENT with armored vehicles and artillery, having thrown back PARTS of the 48th ARMY 8 in the northeast direction, captured the Sologubovka area"; the encircled grouping of Astanin continues "stubborn battles with the enemy FORCE UP TO THE INFANTRY REGIMENT with tanks blocking the exit of the troops of group 6 in the northern direction"; near Tosno and Mgoy

operate ONE REGIMENT OF THE ALL 121st INFANTRY DIVISION.

New changes took place in the leadership of the Soviet troops. On August 29, by the decision of the State Defense Committee, the High Command of the North-West direction was abolished. Its field administration was merged with the Leningrad Front, and the North-Western Front was subordinate to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. It was believed that this would allow the command of the Leningrad Front to focus their efforts on solving the main task - the defense of Leningrad. On August 30, the GKO liquidated the Leningrad Defense Council, transferring its functions to the Military Council of the Front. At the same time, urgent measures were taken to strengthen the grouping of troops in the Leningrad direction.

The Slutsk-Kolpinsky sector of the Krasnogvardeisky fortified area became an independent fortified area; the troops operating here were united into the 55th Army by Major General I.T. Lazarev (70th, 90th, 168th and 237th rifle divisions, 1st and 4th divisions of the people's militia, 2nd rifle regiment).

The remaining formations of the Krasnogvardeisky UR were brought into the 42nd Army by Major General Vladimir Ivanovich Shcherbakov (1900-1981). These were the 291st Rifle

division, which soon departed for the Karelian Isthmus, the 2nd and 3rd guards divisions of the people's militia, the 6th brigade of the marines.

The military council of the 48th army was ordered to fully equip the remaining 21st tank, 311th, 128th rifle divisions and the 1st mountain rifle brigade with marching battalions and weapons (all together they numbered 5838 people on September 1, having armed with only 7 guns, 16 mortars, 46 machine guns), take the NKVD division under its control, recapture the Mga station and push the enemy to the south.

The struggle for the Primorsky (Oraniengbaum) bridgehead (August 22 - September 1941)

The 8th Army (11th, 48th, 118th, 125th, 191st, 268th Rifle Divisions) continued to retreat to the line along the Voronka River, the settlements of Teshkovo, Slobodka, Kipen. The 281st Rifle Division, the 1st Guards DNO, the 2nd People's Militia Division, the 5th Naval Brigade, which remained ownerless, were transferred to its composition.

infantry.

Following this, the commanders were castling: on September 1, Major General V.I. Shcherbakov moved from the post of commander of the 42nd Army to the commanders of the 8th Army, and the former Army Commander-8, Lieutenant General F.S., was appointed in his place. Ivanov. It was also decided to form the 6th and 7th divisions of the people's militia and the 20th rifle division of the NKVD.

Two new armies were deployed on the eastern bank of the Volkhov River - the 54th (285th, 286th, 310th, 314th rifle divisions, the 27th cavalry divisions, the 122nd tank brigade, the 119th separate tank battalion, 881, 882, 883rd corps artillery regiments), under the command of Marshal Grigory Ivanovich Kulik (1890-1950) and the 52nd Army (267, 288.292, 310, 312.294, 316th rifle divisions) Lieutenant General Nikolai Kuzmich Klykov (1888 -1968).

Kulik was given the task of completing the formation of the army within three days, concentrating its troops and launching an offensive on Mga, Pogostya and Saltsy. Taking over the household, the marshal, to his surprise, found two inactive air divisions in the Tikhvin region, about which he informed Moscow. On September 4, an interesting conversation took place between the Leningrad "inmates" and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief:

STALIN: There are two air divisions in Tikhvin - the 39th and the 2nd, both are at your disposal, but they do not receive orders from you. What's the matter, don't you really need aviation?

VOROSHILOV, ZHDANOV: THIS IS UNEXPECTED AND PLEASANT NEWS FOR US... Nobody informed us about the divisions in Tikhvin. Orders will be given today.

STALIN: You misunderstood us. Both of these air divisions are your old divisions. Your front just don't know or forgot 0b them

existence ... You simply do not know or did not know, and now you will learn from us that your two divisions are sitting in the Tikhvin region, and not in Tikhvin itself, which are still

60

Haven't received assignments yet. Kulik found these divisions."

On September 5, Marshal Voroshilov took command of the Leningrad Front, and General M.M. Popov became chief of staff of the front. Almost immediately, Kliment Efremovich asked to be relieved of his post and appointed "someone younger."

On the night of September 4, Finnish troops began to break through the Soviet defenses on the Tuloksa River. On the evening of September 5, they took the city of Olonets, covering almost 30 km in two days. On September 7, the 1st Jaeger Brigade reached the Svir River in the area of Lodeynoye Pole.

Parts of the 67th and 314th Soviet divisions took up defensive positions along the southern bank of the river. But the Finns managed to cross the river and capture a bridgehead up to 100 km wide and 20 km deep. They had 125 km to go to Tikhvin.

Meretskov lists in his memoirs the shortcomings in the actions of the Soviet troops:

"Initially, the command of the 7th Army, organizing the defense, sought to distribute the available forces and means evenly across all sectors. This gave the enemy the opportunity, by concentrating reserves in the right place and temporarily weakening other zones, to use his material and numerical advantage to break through the defenses in the most important directions.

We paid insufficient attention to ensuring the joints between formations and their flanks. Meanwhile, the enemy almost never launched a frontal attack, but, as a rule, used detours and carried out encirclement operations. This circumstance took on special significance in wooded and swampy areas.

Finally, life (!) has shown that when defending on a broad front with one-echelon formation of troops, it is necessary to have significant reserves. It is expedient to place them somewhat closer to the forward edge than under normal conditions, mainly near communication junctions, in settlements, near convenient routes, and preferably not in one place. Here are the conclusions that I made for myself from the battles at Svir.

These are the discoveries that the general made for himself, who before the war commanded armies and districts, advised the Republicans in Spain and held the post of chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. Sad...

On September 8, the 424th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 20th German Motorized Division, overcame the Sinyavin Heights and captured Shlisselburg. Division of the NKVD Colonel SI. Donskoy, despite the fire support of the cruiser "Maxim Gorky", the destroyers "Strict" and "Slender", by that time had lost more than 4

thousand people, and its remnants crossed to the right bank of the river. Only the island, on which the Shlisselburg fortress rises, was in the hands of the Soviet garrison for almost 500 more days.

For both red marshals, the fall of Shlisselburg turned out to be a complete surprise: from the reports of the headquarters it followed that they were advancing in this area.

61

just our troops, "everything is going well", and the 48th army is about to destroy the enemy and liberate Mga. Kulik complained to Voroshilov: "People lie, deceive each other. On paper, everything is fine, but on the cards there are monograms ... Therefore, the capture of Shlisselburg must be attributed to the general lies and ignorance of the affairs of higher authorities, how things are on the spot.

With the exit of the Germans to Lake Ladoga and the upper reaches of the Neva, Leningrad was tightly blocked by enemy troops. However, the fact of the blockade of the city did not immediately become known to the Soviet people. Even on September 12, at the next press conference for foreign journalists, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs A.A. Lozovsky confidently stated:

"The assertion of the Germans that they managed to cut off all the railways connecting Leningrad with the Soviet Union is an exaggeration common to the German command."

The country learned about the blockade of the city only at the beginning of 1942, when a mass evacuation of the population began from it. Here is an entry from the diary of a Leningrader: "Our people are long-suffering! What is being done on the fronts, even near Leningrad, we do not know. We don't know anything! We are cattle. We are dust to be ignored!"

Enemy attempts to capitalize on success, to cross the Neva on the move and connect with the Finnish troops on the Karelian Isthmus, were repelled by units of the 1st NKVD division deployed on the right bank of the river and Major General V.F. Konkov, with the 107th tank battalion attached to it. Soon they were joined by the 10th Infantry and 4th Separate Marine Brigade. In addition, the 48th Army, which was headed by Lieutenant General M.A. Antonyuk, the 286th Rifle Division from the Headquarters reserve entered.

The advance of the Germans from Sinyavino to the east was stopped by the 54th Army at the turn of Lipki - settlement No. 8 - Gaitolovo. But Stalin's patience, having learned of the surrender of Shlisselburg from a foreign radio broadcast, finally ran out: you have taken measures to finally stop losing cities and stations. Just as ugly you reported the loss of Shlisselburg. Maybe you have already decided to surrender Leningrad?! Where did the KV tanks go? Where did you place them? Why is there no improvement at the front, despite such an abundance of KV tanks as you have? After all, not a single front has the same amount of HF as yours. What is your aviation doing? Why does she not support the actions of our Troops?.."

As early as September 4, the Germans fired at Leningrad for the first time from 240-mm KZ guns (firing range of a 152-kg high-explosive projectile - 37.5 km), deployed in the area of Tosno station. On September 6, German aviation in two groups of 30 aircraft made the first massive raid on the city.

62

Leningrad anti-aircraft gunners were excellently equipped with materiel. At various times, they were armed with from 700 to 950 guns, about 150 heavy machine guns, not counting the air defense forces of the fleet and anti-aircraft artillery of ships. General N.P. Milchenko - at that time a lieutenant and battery commander - could not get enough of looking at the 85-mm gun: "And not only because we thoroughly studied these guns at another 8th school. They were simply excellent cannons, possessing High combat properties, capable of hitting suddenly appearing air targets. Moreover, the design features of the gun, the presence of a sufficiently effective remote grenade and armor-piercing projectile made it possible, if necessary, to use it also for firing at airborne troops, ground targets, including firing points and enemy tanks. EVEN IN THE SCHOOL, WE WERE ADMIRING by the excellent tactical and technical data of the 85-MM GUNS.

The work of the artillerymen was provided by two searchlight regiments, an VNOS regiment, sound-measuring stations, and RUS-1 radio detection installations. The immediate approaches to the city and the most important objects were covered by barrage balloon groups. Nevertheless, despite the intense barrage of anti-aircraft artillery, the German pilots managed to break through to the center of Leningrad and drop a large number of incendiary bombs. As a result, there were about 180 fires. The biggest raged in the food warehouses named after A.E. Badaev. A significant amount of grain, flour, sugar died - mainly due to the failure to implement elementary measures to organize air defense.

The VNOS services did not ensure the timely rise of fighter aircraft and its guidance on targets. Some sectors turned out to be completely uncovered, or individual commanders did not know their sectors and freely let enemy aircraft through. Soviet fighters flew into restricted areas and came under fire from their own artillery. It was impossible to control them from the ground due to the lack of airborne radio stations on the aircraft.

Anti-aircraft gunners were not able to distinguish aircraft by silhouettes and recklessly fired at everything that flew. So in August, long-range bombers TB-7 from the division of Colonel M.V. were shot. Vodopyanov, who started from the airfield in Pushkino to Berlin*. Before the war, they did not learn to identify their aviation for reasons of secrecy, German - because of friendship with Hitler: "By the time Nazi Germany attacked our country in the regiment, and in the corps, unfortunately, there was no material support necessary for this, there was no manuals for the study of German aircraft. And all because, as they explained to us, in the pre-war period it was forbidden to publish literature and manuals about the armed forces of Germany in a centralized manner ... When the war began, we began to teach scouts-observers in a handicraft way, as best we could.

* Mikhail Vasilievich Vodopyanov (1899-1980) was a famous polar pilot, in 1934 he became one of the first Heroes of the Soviet Union for participating in the evacuation of the crew of the Chelyuskin steamship

Union. In 1936-37. led flights to the Arctic, including landed on the Northern pole

polar expedition I.D. Papanin.

63

All German equipment in the Soviet design bureaus had long been dismantled to the screw, carefully studied and copied in many "domestic developments", but in the Red Army there were not even pictures depicting the silhouettes of enemy tanks and aircraft!

However, the last problem was solved rather quickly; in extreme situations, the Russians have always been able to show ingenuity, finding simple and original solutions that in peacetime did not occur to them. Leningrad innovators, since they had their own optical and mechanical plant, launched the production of binoculars, in the right eyepiece of which the exact SILHOUETTES of enemy aircraft were engraved !!! It was more difficult to establish a clear organization and interaction of anti-aircraft artillery with fighter aircraft. It took another three months. But even in early December 1941, the order to dismiss the commander and commissar of the air defense corps stated: "The air defense troops are doing their job of protecting Leningrad poorly, the enemy often bombs the city with impunity."

From September 8, 1941, communication with Leningrad could only be maintained through Lake Ladoga and by air. This made it extremely difficult to organize the defense. The available routes did not provide the supply of the necessary material and technical means either for the population of the city or for the troops defending it.

The forces of the Army Group "North" were also exhausted in order. However, the morale of the troops was high, because the cherished goal was almost nearby, it was already possible to wear buttons on uniforms for the parade on Nevsky Prospekt.

Having closed the ring of blockade around Leningrad, the Nazi headquarters considered its fate practically a foregone conclusion. At a meeting of the senior generals on September 5, it was concluded that Field Marshal Leeb would need 6-7 divisions to end the hostilities near Leningrad and join the Finnish troops. The confidence of the Germans in the capture of Leningrad was so great that they even appointed its commandant in advance and printed special passes for cars to travel around the city.

64

Chapter 4. THE STORM OF LENINGRAD (September 9-25, 1941)

On September 6, Hitler signed Directive No. 35. In it, the command of Army Group North was proposed, together with the troops of the South-Eastern Finnish Army, to completely complete the encirclement of Leningrad and, limiting the blockade of the city, transfer mobile units to Army Group Center no later than September 15.

The same directive ordered the 8th Air Corps of Wolfram von Richthofen (1895-1945) to redeploy from Estonia to the south to reinforce the army group of Field Marshal Fyodor von Bock. Less than 300 aircraft remained at Leeb's disposal, including transport and communications aircraft (so far there were 468 combat vehicles against 420 from Leningraders). Hitler announced that in the northwest "the goal was achieved" and now he was in a hurry to take Moscow. Leningrad from now on turned into "a secondary theater of operations."

Given this, von Leeb on September 9, after a powerful artillery and aviation preparation, began a direct assault on the city. The main attack from the south on the center of the Soviet defensive lines was delivered by the Reinhardt corps with the forces of the 1st and 6th tank and 36th motorized divisions. The SS police division and the 269th Infantry Division advanced on Krasnogvardeysk along the highway from Luga. On the left flank, from Ropsha to Kernovo, the 1st, 58th, and 291st Infantry Divisions of the 18th Army deployed; on the right, south of Kolpino, are the shock forces of the 16th Army (121st, 96th, 122nd Infantry Divisions). In the Shlisselburg area, along the southern tip of Lake Ladoga, the 20th Motorized Division of Major General Zorn and a regiment of the 126th Infantry Division operated.

Thus, 11 German divisions took part directly in the attack on Leningrad. They were opposed by the forces of the 42nd and 55th armies, the left flank of the 8th army. Behind the enemy lines, the divisions of the Southern Group of General Astanin (25 thousand people and 6 last tanks), exhausted by many days of foot crossing through forests and swamps, continuous battles and bombing, having almost no fuel, ammunition and food, still tried to break through Vyritsa and Mina on connection with the main forces of the front.

Left near Luga as a cover force, the 235th Rifle Division and the militia regiment had already ceased to exist by that time. From the negotiations between Moscow and Leningrad, one gets the impression that the residents of Astana "broke through" in a somewhat strange way - by storming settlements. In the north, they were opposed by units of the 8th Panzer Division, from the south they were propped up by the 285th security division.

The Germans, acting as mobile assault groups, had to literally gnaw through the defense step by step. Alan Clark writes:

"Both panzer divisions soon became stuck in a network of anti-tank ditches and scattered field fortifications built by construction battalions and home guards. These defenses were often ill-placed and poorly executed, but there were many..."

It was in this kind of action - in close combat - that typical Russian qualities, such as courage, tenacity, ingenuity in the use of camouflage and grunt, more than compensated for those shortcomings in leadership and material

units, which led to huge losses in open areas on the border and on Luga.

German tanks, on the other hand, suffered, like all armored forces that ran into close defenses. The tankers suffered heavy casualties as their commanders tried to adjust to the unfamiliar surroundings. On the very first day of the offensive, four commanders of the 6th Panzer Division were killed.

By the evening of September 10, in the sector of the 3rd Guards People's Militia Division, the enemy managed to advance 3 km towards Krasnoye Selo. The command of the Leningrad Front, which considered the offensive of the 41st motorized and 38th army corps a distraction, reinforced the 42nd army with the 1st tank division, the 500th rifle regiment, the 1st marine brigade and two tank battalions. General Ivanov was ordered to personally arrive at the front line, organize a counteroffensive during the night and destroy the enemy group that had broken through with "concentric strikes".

The rear fortified position on the Pulkovo Heights was to be occupied by the newly formed 5th division of the people's militia.

On the same day, the 8th Soviet Army went on the offensive with all its might, inflicting the main blow on Gostilitsy. However, she was not successful, and her 118th Rifle Division, which managed to move forward 3-5 km, was cut off by the Germans south of Mikhailovsky.

"Concentric strikes" did not take place. On the morning of September 11, General Reinhardt broke through the positions on the right flank of the 2nd Guards DNO and captured Duderhof by the end of the day. On September 12, the 58th Infantry Division of General Hoynert broke into Krasnoye Selo, units of the 1st Panzer Division captured the village of Bolshoe Vittolovo and reached the approaches to Pulkovo. At the same time, the 6th Panzer bypassed Krasnogvardeysk, which fell the next day. Together with him, two regiments of the 2nd Guards DNO Colonel V.A. were killed. Trubachev.

Battalions of the 96th and 121st infantry divisions of the Wehrmacht broke into Slutsk. The commanders and commissars of the 90th and 237th Soviet rifle divisions marched under the tribunal.

The front line came close to Leningrad. To the city. powerful artillery and air strikes fell one after another. The German noose was gradually and, it seemed, inevitably compressed.

However, the headquarters of the OKH saw more and more clearly that bloody battles were unfolding in the theater of operations, from where they expected to take reinforcements. General Halder informed Leeb that the city "should not be taken, but only surrounded. The offensive should not go beyond the Peterhof-Pushkin highway.

Hitler on September 12 issued a new directive in which he instructed not to remove

air and armored forces up to the complete encirclement of Leningrad. Therefore, the date specified in Directive No. 35 for redeployment "may be moved by a few days." In fact, Leeb had only three extra days, and he was in a hurry to use them.

Meanwhile, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decided to honor the request of the "First Red Marshal" and appoint General of the Army Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov (1896-1974) as commander of the troops of the Leningrad Front, who arrived from Moscow on the morning of September 13, in the midst of the German assault. Generals Mikhail Semenovitch Khazin (1896-1979) arrived with him - the new chief of staff, Ivan Ivanovich Fedyuninsky (1900-1977), P.I. Kokorev.

Without delving into the situation, Georgy Konstantinovich first of all announced that it was not only necessary to beat the enemy, but it was also possible without much effort, it was necessary

just "act harder." But already at three in the morning, having received news of the loss of Krasnogvardeisk, Zhukov reported to Moscow that the situation in

Leningrad "much more difficult than it seemed to the General Staff." Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Boris Mikhailovich Shaposhnikov (1882-1945)

wondered: "How so"? It turns out that it was as if the Krasnogvardeisky UR did not exist. "

Zhukov explained to him: "Very simple. At the Krasnogvardeisky UR, the ur units and the guard units did not seriously fight, since the enemy, having broken through the copses, bypassed the units from the flank and rear, and under the influence of the enemy's bypass, the 3rd division completely fled. The 2nd division fled partially. And the enemy rushed into this gaping hole. Parts of the 42nd Army are fighting extremely badly, and, apparently, there was no real struggle and reprisals against cowards and alarmists in this army. I think that in the coming days we will put things in order and make them fight as expected.

The next day, the Military Council of the front, with the participation of the commander of the Baltic Fleet, discussed the situation and, in order to strengthen the defense of the city, determined additional measures that were taken urgently. At the disposal of the command were the 8th, 42nd, 55th and 23rd armies, in which there were 30 rifle divisions (together with the divisions of the people's militia, which officially became rifle from September 23), 6 separate brigades of marines, all industrial and human resources of a huge city.

It was decided to disband the field administration of the 48th Army, its troops to be transferred to Kulik. Within a week, it was planned to form two more rifle divisions and five rifle brigades, and create four defensive lines. Strengthen the anti-tank defense in the most dangerous sectors with anti-aircraft guns, concentrate the fire of all naval artillery in the zone of the 42nd Army from Uritsk to the Pulkovo Heights, transfer part of the forces of the 23rd Army from the Karelian Isthmus to the Uritsk area, form new formations from sailors, from listeners Leningrad military educational institutions.

The course of hostilities on the near approaches to Leningrad (September 1941)

67

On September 15, Zhukov removed the commander of the 42nd Army, General Ivanov, "as incapable of leading the army," appointing Major General I.I. Fedyuninsky. The new army commander first of all made sure that he actually had no army, and also no headquarters, intelligence, communications and supply service; there is an armed uncontrollable mass:

"First of all, it was necessary to restore command and control of the troops, accurately determine the position of units and formations, the degree of their combat capability, their ability to resist, find out which areas are the most threatened and require immediate reinforcement. Next, it was necessary to take into account all the reserves, provide for the possibility and options for their use, take care of providing the troops with a sufficient amount of ammunition and engineering equipment, which is extremely necessary in defense.

The front was reinforced by the 21st rifle division of the NKVD, the 5th, 6th and 7th divisions of the people's militia, the 10th Red Banner and 11th rifle divisions and two rifle brigades manned by sailors and personnel of air defense units. These formations formed the second echelon of defense, however, it soon became the first.

The fighting on the near approaches became more and more fierce.

German attempts to break through the Neva, as well as to advance along the Moscow-Leningrad highway and capture Kolpino, were repelled. The Germans had no chance to overcome the 800-meter expanse of the Neva under the fire of the guns of Soviet warships and the 180-mm and 120-mm stationary batteries installed on the right bank.

In connection with the enemy's intentions to establish a crossing across the Neva at the Nevskaya Dubrovka-Moscow Dubrovka section, Zhukov told a heartbreaking story in his memoirs: "Soviet women, children and the elderly, driven from the nearest settlements, were placed in front of the German units. In order not to hurt our people, it was necessary to especially clearly conduct mortar and artillery fire at the enemy, who was in the 8th depth of his battle formations.

Perhaps such a fact (the setting up of a barrier from the civilian population) actually took place (although there is no documentary evidence), but Zhukovsky's belated compassion is a lie.

Georgy Konstantinovich did not suffer from intellectual complexes, but strictly adhered to the instructions of Comrade Stalin in this matter: "They say that the German bastards, going to Leningrad, send delegates ahead of their troops from the areas they occupied - old men, old women, women and children - with a request to

to the Bolsheviks to surrender Leningrad and establish peace. It is said that among the Leningrad Bolsheviks there were people who do not consider it possible to use weapons against such delegates. I believe that if there are such people among the Bolsheviks, then they must be destroyed in the first place, because they are more dangerous than the German fascists.

68

My answer: do not be sentimental, but beat the enemy and his accomplices, voluntary or involuntary, in the teeth. War is relentless, and it brings defeat first of all to those who have shown weakness and vacillation. If anyone in our ranks vacillates, he will be the main culprit in the fall of Leningrad.

Hit with might and main on the Germans AND THEIR DELEGATES, whoever they may be, bone the enemies, it doesn't matter whether they are voluntary or involuntary enemies. No mercy for the German scoundrels or their delegates, whoever they may be."

By and large, the leaders from the Kremlin and Smolny wanted to spit on all these "old men and old women", there was still no benefit from them, only extra mouths. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine Zhukov showing humanism and risking being enlisted as "enemy accomplices." In fact, Zhukov, Zhdanov, Kuznetsov and Merkulov not only brought the order to the attention of all personnel without delay, but also supplemented it with the demand "to immediately open fire on all persons approaching the front line and prevent them from approaching our positions", not looking who is "approaching" there, women or children.

The new commander of the Leningrad Front outlined his city defense strategy as follows: "It was necessary, at the slightest opportunity, to counterattack the enemy day and night, exhaust and inflict losses on him in manpower and equipment, disrupt his offensive measures ... Counterattacks and counterattacks forced the enemy to advance in slow motion pace."

Already on September 14, Zhukov reported to Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov that he was "organizing a strike" on the front of the 8th Army and planning a "transition to the offensive" of the 55th and 42nd armies. Every day, Soviet divisions "made counterattacks", "liquidated", "restored the situation", attacked, attacked, attacked, advancing on their own corpses, hiding with their own corpses and filling up the enemy with their corpses. A little later, near Vyazma and Rzhev, the soldiers gave this method of warfare their own definition - "Zhukov's three-row."

At the Tosnensky line, the 4th division of the people's militia, Colonel P.I. Radygina continuously, with separate regiments, unsuccessfully tried to force the Tosna River and recapture the settlements of Ust-Tosno, Ivanovskoye, Pokrovskoye on the right bank from the enemy. There was practically no artillery in the division. More or less serious fire support was provided by railway batteries and a destroyer, which took up a position at the mouth of the Neva, but they fired at the squares, and their fire was not corrected.

On September 4, the 3rd Rifle Regiment was ordered to cross Tosna and take

Pokrovskoye village. At the beginning of the operation, the regiment suffered significant losses and, under enemy fire, lay down in front of the river. The officers, under heavy fire, managed to raise the regiment on the attack, cross the river and take Pokrovskoye with a fight. But there was nothing to develop success. Fierce fighting for the village lasted four days. The regiment that did not receive support was cut off by the enemy from the coast and completely

69

destroyed led by regiment commander Chugunov.

On September 11, Colonel Radygin, who refused to obey the order of N.V. Solovyov, who took it into his head to organize a small victorious offensive in his personal presence, was removed from command of the division and demoted to the rank and file. There was another "disciplinary practice": in case of failure, the regiment commander was held accountable "for the grave condition of the regiment and heavy losses in battle."

As a result, the 4th division of the people's militia, having not completed a single task, was thrown back behind the line of an anti-tank ditch stretching from the Neva to the Moscow highway. This ditch, which had a width of 8 m, a depth of 3 m, as usual, was not defended by the Soviet units, so the battalions of the 122nd Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht firmly settled in it. The Germans, who had the commendable habit of entrenching themselves at every occupied line, immediately began to develop a network of communication passages, machine-gun pillboxes and minefields.

The militias, who had practically lost their combat capability, lay down in a swamp 100 meters from the moat. Retired Major General L.V. Yakovlev described the state of "defense" as he took command of one of the regiments of the 4th DNO:

"The front line of defense took place in a damp peat swamp. The fighters lay on the surface of the swamp, and their only cover was moss and bushes shorter than a man. The regiment was forced to defend itself in these difficult conditions, since the walls of Leningrad supported it from behind. In such conditions, it was difficult to maintain the combat capability of the unit. On the right, under the same conditions, the 330th Infantry Regiment was defending; on the left, on drier terrain, the 284th SP held the defense.

Reception and surrender of the regiment took place in a matter of minutes. The old regiment commander, who was in a depressed state, reported the situation in the defended sector with difficulty. After the fighting, the regiment suffered heavy losses in personnel and weapons, and the defense it occupied did not have any engineering shelters. The condition of the regiment was difficult, the people were exhausted and were in complete apathy and depression. Captain Smorodkin and I went around the regiment's defense area and everywhere we ran into groups of soldiers lying on wet peat and not reacting in any way to being addressed to them ... People have not washed since the beginning of the war.

The army of Fedyuninsky, with varying success, fought for Uritsk and Volodarsky, several times passing from hand to hand. The 8th army of General Shcherbakov had the task of "delivering blows to the enemy in the flank and rear" and delivered them, regardless of losses.

The southern group, on the advice of Marshal Shaposhnikov, on September 14 was ordered to stop the "exhausting battle for the capture of Vyritsa", and go around it from the east and along the Susanino-Pushkino railway to go to the location of the 55th Army. Poorly imagining the state of the troops of Astana and assuming to use them in the counteroffensive planned for September 17, the front command demanded: "All horse-drawn artillery, mortars, machine guns and horse carts should be withdrawn. Everything that cannot be brought out should be buried and carefully disguised."

70

But by that time the group had already broken up into separate unmanaged parts. Horse carts existed only in Zhukov's imagination. There were 36 guns without shells, which the gunners pulled out on themselves. The next day, the Southern Group as a whole ceased to exist. The 90th Rifle Division, which had been rushing towards it for two weeks, was surrounded by the Germans in the Semrino-Kabralovo area. In the evening, by order of General Astanin, who reported to the front headquarters on the radio about the hopelessness of the situation, the destruction of equipment and military property began.

A few hours later, his troops received permission to get out of the encirclement in small groups. In the second half of September, only separate consolidated units under the command of Colonels M.I. Chesnokova, I.S. Pavlov and General A.N. Astana - only about two thousand people. Another three hundred fighters were brought out of the enemy rear by partisans.

For half a month, bypassing large settlements, the remnants of the 111th Infantry Division under the command of Colonel SV wandered behind enemy lines. Roginsky, who had no connection with the command and turned east. By the beginning of October, they reached the Volkhov River in the Yamno region, where only three hundred fighters and commanders crossed to the left bank. In the area of Pogostya, a group of artillerymen G.F. Odintsov.

According to the Germans, during the liquidation of the Luga "cauldron" they captured 21,000 prisoners, 316 tanks and 600 guns. Only the 24th Panzer Division of Colonel M.I. Chesnokova, who entered the battle for the first time on August 2, lost 162 tanks and 40 armored vehicles - all military equipment.

However, the losses of the Germans also grew, and the successes were less and less significant. On September 14, the Design Bureau issued an order for the immediate withdrawal of the 41st Motorized and 8th Air Corps. General Reinhard recalled: "When the troops were already in full anticipation of the triumph of a well-deserved victory, news came from the headquarters of the tank group like a cold shower that instead of storming Leningrad there would be a blockade ... We simply could not understand anything. At the very last minute, the soldiers who did everything for victory were deprived of the crown of the winners.

On the night of September 17, the 1st Panzer Division began to load its surviving vehicles onto railway platforms south of Krasnogvardeysk, and the 36th Motorized Division headed under its own power to Pskov. Major General Landgraf's 6th Panzer Division, which had only suffered heavy losses, was delayed for several days in order to withdraw from the battle and put itself in order. From the front under

32 thousand German soldiers and 260 tanks left Leningrad, the 18th Army lost its shock fist. On the evening of September 18, Halder noted in his diary:

"The ring around Leningrad is not yet closed as tightly as we would like. It is doubtful that our troops will be able to advance far if we withdraw the 1st Panzer and 36th Motorized Divisions from this sector. Taking into account the need for troops on the Leningrad sector of the front, where the enemy has concentrated large human and material forces and means, the situation here will be

71

tense until our ally, hunger, makes itself felt.

With the departure of the 41st motorized corps, the density of the German battle formations decreased, which allowed the 90th rifle division, which had lost half its personnel and guns, to break through Pushkin to the north.

Almost immediately after the Germans reached Lake Ladoga, the Soviet command made an attempt to restore the city's land connection with the country with strikes from the west by the troops of the Leningrad Front and from the east by the forces of the 54th Army.

This army was unusual: it had eight divisions, the 16th and 122nd tank brigades, the 119th separate tank battalion, a significant amount of artillery; she reported directly to the Headquarters, and Marshal G.I. Kulik, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense. The rear of the army was under the eyeballs are crammed with military property and equipment, echelons with marching reinforcements intended both for Kulik's troops and for the entire Leningrad Front.

Grigory Ivanovich launched an offensive on September 10, and his first reports breathed optimism: the enemy was successfully "destroyed" and "exterminated", although he "passed over to exceptionally staunch resistance", he managed to take "rich trophies". However, soon Kulik, who struck with a fan, in all directions at the same time: on Kirishi, Po-guest, Mga, along the shore of Lake Ladoga - on Shlisselburg, found that he himself was running out of people and equipment catastrophically quickly, and the offensive was exhausted.

The Germans held the front with mobile groups of the 20th motorized division, continuously pounded the left flank with the forces of the 12th tank division, maneuvered with reserves, while intensively fortifying the Sinyavino area, workers' settlements No. an average of 6-9 km, and the enemy captured Voronovo during this time.

On September 13, Voroshilov and Zhukov demanded from Kulik, not paying attention to the state of affairs on the left flank of the army, to organize a powerful attack on Shlisselburg, and then in the direction of Mga. Three days later, Stalin and Shaposhnikov ordered the marshal not to waste time capturing Shlisselburg, but to concentrate all efforts on the liberation of the Mga station, "laby to open a message with Zhukov."

With Zhukov, Kulik did not succeed in interaction or mutual understanding. The commander of the Lenfront, considering the "liquidation of the Krasnoselskaya grouping" of the enemy as the main issue, allocated only one 115th rifle division and an understaffed naval brigade to break through the blockade, himself after the war stating that the task assigned to them of forcing the Neva and breaking through the German defense "was extremely difficult, one might say, unbearable. . Indeed, the order received by division commander V.F. Konkov, demanded, no more, no less than without means of crossing, without the support of artillery, tanks, aviation, to force the Neva on the front from Ivanovsky to Moscow Dubrovka, seize a bridgehead and lead

72

attack on Mgu. One day was allotted for the preparation of the operation.

At the same time, the army general did not hesitate to accuse the USSR marshal of indifference to the fate of Leningrad. On the night of September 15, a characteristic telephone conversation took place between the two military leaders: "Zhukov. I greet you, Grigory Ivanovich! .. I would like you and I to quickly begin work on clearing the territory on which we could shake hands and organize the rear of the Leningrad Front. Please briefly report on the situation. In turn, I want to inform what is being done near Leningrad."

A person who has served in the army for at least a month is completely clear that Georgy Konstantinovich is openly rude to a commander who has fallen into disgrace, but still senior in rank, position and age. Then Zhukov "persistently asked" Kulik to immediately go on the offensive at the Mga station and "to move the cavalry behind enemy lines as soon as possible." To this, the marshal, of course, not such a brilliant commander in order to organize an operation in a new direction in one night, quite reasonably replied that he needed a day or two to bring up artillery, bring units to their starting line and work out their interaction on the spot. Moreover, the 54th Army had to advance through heavy wooded and swampy terrain, and it was opposed by a mobile and serious enemy - the tank and motorized divisions of the 39th motorized corps. Subsequent events showed that the task assigned to Kulik was completely impossible under those conditions. But Zhukov was not satisfied with such an independence of the marshal and his commitment to observing the rules of military art, and he did not hide his irritation: "It is clear that you first of all care about the well-being of the 54th Army and, apparently, you are not worried enough about the situation near Leningrad. .. I realized that I can't count on an active maneuver on your part. I WILL RE

TO SOLVE THE TASK YOURSELF.

The Commander of the Leningrad Front immediately informed the Supreme Commander of this conversation, and he accepted Zhukov's "truth", the one who reported first was always right with us. In addition, the leader was always ready to "sacrifice several divisions" for a good cause. Stalin put pressure on Kulik and in his own way stimulated him to take active steps: "Keep in mind that if you hit Mga properly tomorrow in order to break through or bypass the defenses of Mga, you will get two good personnel divisions from us and MAYBE, a new tank brigade. But if you delay

strike tomorrow, I give you my word that you will receive neither two divisions nor a tank brigade."

Kulik did not receive additional "good divisions", although it is likely that they could have said a "weighty word" at a decisive moment. The troops of the 54th Army failed to capture Mga, having washed themselves with blood for the first time at the Sinyavino Heights. However, Zhukov did not liquidate the Krasnoselskaya group either. There was little sense in the fact that he threw untrained, poorly armed workers, sailors and Valaam cabin boys into battle, forcing them to "fight as expected", without ensuring interaction with artillery and aircraft. Regiments and battalions perished as a whole, causing only minor damage to the enemy.

73

On September 17, the day the Germans withdrew the main forces of the 3rd and 4th Panzer Groups and the 8th Aviation Corps from the battle for Leningrad, General of the Army Zhukov issued combat order No. frontier: Ligovo, Kiskino, Verkh. Koyrovo, Pulkovo Heights, Moscow Slavyanka, Shushary, Kolpino, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front orders to announce to all command, political and ordinary personnel defending the indicated line that all commanders, political workers and soldiers were left without a written order of the Military Council of the front and the army of the indicated line subject to immediate execution."

and today a certain part of Russian historians consider this decision to be correct, explaining that Zhukov thus sought to "restore confidence in his forces and capabilities to the troops", and the order itself "laid the foundation

moral transformation and creative development of the ideas embodied in the infamous order No. 270, at the end of the month the front commander signed cipher No. 4976, which says: "Explain to all personnel that all families of those who surrendered to the enemy will be shot and upon returning everyone will also be shot."

And for greater "confidence", the general drove his armies into the attack, shooting them in the back with machine guns. Former company commander of the 42nd Infantry Regiment of the 268th Division A.F. Safronov recalls: "The Germans continuously shelled the hillock, many people died here. We took the hillock, but the Germans opened such fire that the remaining 6 survivors had to slide back to the ravine 86, to the highway. And behind the highway - our detachment with machine guns "Maxim". Shoot and the Germans, and ours. The guys huddled in front of the hillock - THERE IS NO WHERE TO GO.

Of course, the problem of the deterioration of the morale of the troops, due to continuous defeats, huge losses, the apparent mediocrity of the leadership, bestial attitude towards the soldiers, took place, it could not be otherwise. Desertion increased; in just three days (September 17-19) the commandant's office of Leningrad detained 4,425 servicemen. There were defeatist moods, crossbows, cases of going over to the side of the enemy and fraternizing with the Germans. But after all, the usual Bolshevik medicines used to raise morale and strengthen discipline were no better than the "disease" itself. Former private infantry N.N. Nikulin writes: "The punitive organs worked perfectly for us. From Malyuta Skuratov to Beria, there have always been PROFESSIONALS in their 6 ranks, and always

there were many who wanted to devote themselves to this noble and necessary cause in every state. In peacetime, this profession is easier and more interesting than

arable farming and labor at the machine. And the profit is greater, and the power over others is complete. A 8 War - do not expose your head to bullets, just make sure that others

did it right.

The troops went on the attack, driven by horror. The meeting with the Germans was terrible, with their machine guns and tanks, the fiery meat grinder of bombing and artillery shelling. The inexorable threat of execution caused no less horror. To keep in check an amorphous mass of poorly trained soldiers, executions

74

were held before the battle. They grabbed some frail goners or those who blurted out something, or random deserters, who were always in abundance. They lined up the division with the letter "PGT" and finished off the unfortunate without talking.

This preventive work resulted in a greater fear of the NKVD and the commissars than of the Germans. And in the offensive, if you turn back, you will receive a bullet from the detachment. Fear made me go to death. Our wise party, the leader and organizer of our victories, counted on this. They shot, of course, after an unsuccessful battle. And it also happened that detachments mowed down regiments retreating without orders from machine guns. Hence the combat readiness of our valiant troops. Many surrendered, but, as you know, the Germans were not fed with sweet pies "...

Neither Stalin nor Zhukov knew anything about Hitler's new directives and still believed that the main goal of Army Group North was to capture the city. The front commander concentrated the main forces to repel the German offensive in the area of the Pulkovo Heights.

Well, until the end of the month, Leeb continued the offensive, and quite successfully, on the near approaches to Leningrad, but now only with the aim of diverting more forces of the Leningrad Front from the Luban direction, where the 54th army was advancing in order to break the blockade of the city. Zhukov, on the other hand, continued to build up forces at the Pulkovo line, removing them from Oranienbaum and the Karelian Isthmus.

September 17 was the most critical day for Leningrad. The 1st Infantry Division of General Kleffel reached the coast of the Gulf of Finland near Strelina, having captured part of Peterhof, the 58th Division of General Hoynert occupied Uritsk. To the right, von Leiser's soldiers captured Pushkin.

The 8th Soviet Army was cut off from the rest of the troops of the Leningrad Front. There was no connection with the army: the Germans cut all the telephone wires, and the Soviet troops used radio stations even at the level of army headquarters

were just learning.

To prevent the enemy from breaking through to Leningrad through Uritsk, Zhukov ordered the 42nd Army to immediately organize a counterattack. She went into battle, recaptured the village, was driven farther forward, cut off by the Germans and the 21st motorized rifle division of the NKVD, Colonel M.D., perished. Papchenko. "You can understand Zhukov's anger," sympathizes with the writer V. Karpov, who demanded that the commander of the 42nd Army return Uritsk at all costs. The 5th and 3rd Guards DNOs and the 51st Separate Tank Battalion were thrown into the new attack.

Shcherbakov's army was ordered to organize a counterattack with at least five divisions in the direction of Krasnoe Selo and restore the torn front. Thirty years later, recalling and reflecting, the marshal highly appreciated the result achieved: "An extremely important role in disrupting the enemy's plans - a breakthrough to Leningrad through Uritsk was played by the counterattack of the 8th Army. Her ular grouping, consisting of four rifle divisions, on the morning of September 19, went on the offensive in

75

general direction to Krasnoye Selo. Although this offensive did not lead to the restoration of defense here, it forced the Germans to regroup part of their forces from the most dangerous direction for us, Uritsk-Leningrad, to Peterhof, which was foreseen by us in advance.

The writer V. Karpov in his book "Marshal Zhukov", describing this counterattack, simply falls into euphoria with admiration:

"But Zhukov is Zhukov! ... In a short time - in a day - Zhukov created a shock group. It is easy to say, created - from what? Where did you get the strength? In the sector of the 8th Army, after all, there were still the same defending divisions. He only condensed their battle formations, gave everything he could to strengthen them, and on September 19 hit the advancing Leeb wedge in the flank. This was completely unexpected for the enemy. Imagine the state of von Leeb, who was already triumphant in his soul and saw, probably, the streets of captured Leningrad in front of him. And suddenly this blow on the flank, a blow literally in the stomach! After all, Leeb gathered everything he had, rushing into the last and decisive offensive in the Pulkovo direction. There was nothing to repel Zhukov's blow on the flank of this grouping, it was necessary to withdraw forces from where luck and victory were outlined. Leeb understood that as long as the reserves approached, Zhukov's units would break out to the rear and grind everything so that they would have to move away from Leningrad altogether.

And Leeb gives the order to withdraw the mechanized corps, already aimed to strike where he saw the greatest success, and abandon this corps to save the flank. But that was exactly what Zhukov's goal was. The pressure on the Pulkovo frontier weakened. Although the 8th Army did not plunge deep into the enemy's location, it fulfilled its purpose."

There are at least three false notes in this ode to Zhukovsky's genius.

Firstly, what kind of motorized corps and where did Leeb "take off" if he had

there wasn't one?

Secondly, this story had a sad continuation: on September 20, the Germans hit the left flank of the advancing Soviet troops, defeated them and forced them to leave even those settlements that they occupied before the epic counterattack, in particular, Strelina. Then, in 1941, Zhukov did not at all consider that everything went as "foreseen in advance", and gave the command of the 8th Army a completely different assessment - TRAITORS.

In a telegram dated September 22, the front commander ordered the Army Military Council to organize a new offensive near Peterhof, and ordered the commander and his headquarters to personally lead the troops into the attack, not forgetting, as usual, to "inspire confidence":

"If the 8th Army allows the Germans to capture Peterhof, the Germans will defeat Kronstadt for us.

The 8th Army, by its actions, not only brings the Leningrad Front down, but plays a treacherous role. While 23, 42, 55 A brilliantly reflect all

76

German attacks, inflicting enormous losses on them, the 8th Army, having 3-4 thousand Germans against it with 10-20 tanks, shamefully scatters at the first shot. The military council is inactive, more focused on evacuation rather than hard fighting. Such a military council fully deserved severe punishment, up to and including execution.

I demand: Shcherbakov, Chukhnov, Kokorev to go to the 2nd bottom, 11th division, 10th division and personally lead them into battle. Shevaldina and Kokoreva warn commanders of all levels that they will be shot as cowards and traitors for leaving Peterhof and defensive positions south of Peterhof without permission. To announce to everyone - NOT A SINGLE SHOT BACK.

A day later, after Petrodvorets was surrendered to the Germans, the front commander removed General Shcherbakov and a member of the Military Council, divisional commissar I.V. Chukhnov, ordered the arrest of a number of unit commanders. The army was accepted by Lieutenant General T. I. Shevaldin.

Thirdly, both the red commanders and the enthusiastic chroniclers of their deeds quite deliberately neglect arithmetic. Answer the rhetorical question "where did Zhukov get his strength?" quite easy. He had half a million soldiers at his disposal! Meanwhile, Field Marshal Leeb, after the departure of the 41st motorized corps in mid-September to the Moscow direction and the 96th division to Voronovo, to the eastern section of the Sinyavinsky ledge, stormed Leningrad, having six infantry divisions in the asset - 291, 58, 1, 269, 121, 122nd and another SS police division. It was their "fierce attacks" that heroically held back by "active defense" at least 27 divisions of General Zhukov.

The science of "compacting battle formations" was not great: only at Oranienbaum

bridgehead, which the Germans called the "Oranienbaum cauldron", turned out to be 12 divisions (10, 281, 48, 191, 125, 268, 118, 261, 11th rifle, 1st guards and 2nd

militia), as well as the 5th and 2nd separate brigades of the marines, the 1st tank regiment of the 1st tank division.

True, many of these formations, thanks to the "most advanced in the world" tactics of continuous attacks, without fire support and securing lines, could only be called divisions conditionally: for example, in the 48th division, Lieutenant Colonel P.S. Romantsev left 1700 people, 3 heavy machine guns, 8 mortars and 2 guns. But Commissar General Okorokov, who became a member of the Military Council of the 8th Army, claims: "The replenishment of the army's combat ranks was in full swing." (At the same time, "work was carried out to clean the units from strangers and hidden enemies", the removal of "Westerners" recognized as unreliable from combat units, that is, those who before the war lived on the territory of Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and the Baltic States. For example, the mentioned veterans of the bridgehead of the 74th Latvian regiment).

So after all, only the 1st Infantry Division took Peterhof from the Germans. Zhukov wrote in Order No. 0043: "In front of the front of the 8th Army, units of one or two infantry divisions are operating."

Soviet units on the bridgehead, which was 50 km long and 35 km deep, supported the 12-inch guns of the battleships with powerful artillery fire.

77

"Marat" and "October Revolution", forts Krasnaya Gorka and Seraya Horse, 180-mm guns of cruisers and 130-mm destroyers, 11th (356-mm) and 18th (305-mm) railway batteries, armored trains No. 7 "Baltiets" and No. 8 "For the Motherland". There were plenty of troops and equipment here. On September 16-18, the fleet carried out an operation to transfer from Oranienbaum to Leningrad the 125th and 268th rifle divisions and the 47th corps artillery regiment, which were withdrawn to the front reserve; in the second half of October, six more divisions were withdrawn.

And in 1941, two infantry divisions of the Germans were engaged in the blockade of the bridgehead and the reflection of almost daily Soviet attacks and counterattacks. And in 1942, and in 1943, too, they ...

Three German divisions operated from Uritsk to the southern outskirts of Pulkovo. They were opposed by five divisions: 44th (former 3rd Guards DNO), 21st, 56th (7th DNO), 189th (6th DNO) and 13th (5th DNO), 6th and 7th rifle, 123rd and 124th tank

brigades of the 42nd Army, built in two echelons. The fighting of the Fedyuninsky troops was actively supported by the artillery of the Leningrad Naval Defense, reinforced by the 12th and 19th railway batteries.

According to Marshal Zhukov, only on the 17-kilometer section of Ligovo - Pulkovo, and only on direct fire, 529 guns were withdrawn. 441 guns operated in the Kolpino area, of which 300 guns were put up for direct fire.

By the way, why put the guns on direct fire? And in order to at least sometimes hit the target. For firing from closed positions, it is necessary to have reliable means of communication, well-developed crews, trained spotters, and a competent fire control. All this was not there, therefore, for 100 shells fired, there were two or three hits, hence the eternal "shell hunger".

Therefore, guns (sometimes even of special power) were often rolled out by entire divisions, and even artillery regiments, to open forward positions, each calculation saw its target and worked independently, firing at the enemy from almost a "dueling" distance. At the same time, significant losses in people and materiel were inevitable, but the accuracy increased to 8.5 percent. Artillerymen called shooting direct fire: "Farewell, Motherland!" There was also another designation - in the language of profanity.

But the "enemy command", unlike the Soviet one, according to the observation of Colonel Georgy Fedotovitch Odintsov (1900-1972), the future marshal of the USSR, "took care of its artillery, enemy batteries most often fired from closed positions, they did not advance for direct fire."

General I.I. Fedyuninsky was later proud: "Despite the fact that we had few forces, we continually inflicted sensitive blows on the enemy, not allowing him to withdraw from the front and transfer to Moscow, where the Nazis developed the offensive, not a single division ... Until the very middle October, there were battles in the Uritsk region, near the Peterhof highway, for the Proletarsky Trul state farm. And they came for

78

us a good school...

In the army at that time there were many commanders called up from the reserve, who did not have solid military training and experience in leading the battle. Our commanders were distinguished by courage, were devoted to the Motherland, but the lack of combat experience made itself felt ... In the offensive, the rear sometimes lagged behind, although there was progress
insignificant."

It is interesting that the Finnish commanders, who calmly and with minimal losses regained the "Mannerheim Line", which the Red Army fought in bloody snot for three months in the winter of 1939/40, had quite

enough. And the hero of Khalkhin Gol was still studying, gaining experience.

At the Tosnensky line, the 4th division of the people's militia continued to "study". And here the offensive orders followed one after another - with the same tasks, all with the same forces:

September 21: "4th BOTTOM to seize Ivanovskoye, Pokrovskoye, drive the enemy out of the anti-tank ditch south of Kolpino";

September 23: "4th DNO to seize the anti-tank ditch in the Kolpinskaya colony area, crossings to Ust-Tosno";

September 25: "The 86th division (former 4th DNO) with armored platforms to seize the anti-tank ditch, force the Tosna River, seize Ivanovskoye."

This ditch started from the village of Yam-Izhora on the Moscow highway, crossed the Oktyabrskaya and Kirovskaya railways and went out to the Neva behind the Leningradstroy plant. Only 2.5 km of the northern section of the ditch to the dirt road to Ivanovskoye were in the hands of the Soviet troops, the remaining 8.5 km to the highway itself were in the possession of the Germans.

At the end of the month, the 268th and 125th rifle divisions removed from the Oranienbaum bridgehead joined the assault on the anti-tank ditch. All of them were opposed by the 122nd Infantry Division of General Makholz.

To the right, from Kolpino to Pulkovo, the 168th, 90th and 70th rifle divisions, the 84th and 86th tank battalions of the 55th army fought with the 121st infantry division of the enemy in the same way. The losses of the army only in the area from Kolpino to the Neva in September 1941 amounted to more than 17 thousand people. The division of Colonel Bondarev in the battles for Slutsk lost 7,477 fighters - almost its entire composition.

Zhukov in his memoirs praised the division as "particularly distinguished." Continuously attacking divisions were invariably given "confidence in their forces" by seven machine-gun and artillery battalions deployed in the second echelon of the army and four barrage detachments.

And now this military squalor has been presented to us for 60 years as a great victory of the great strategic genius. Was there a victory? There was, no doubt. But is there anything to be proud of the commander?

79

By the way, the greater losses and at the same time the insufficient "penetrating power" of the Soviet divisions in the offensive was laid down in the Combat Regulations. The writings of his generals, fantasizing about the themes of the future Great War, apparently, considered the crown of the attack the bayonet strike of the infantry masses: "That's why the rifle and the bayonet are to hit the fascist in the face!" "If you bayonet the fascists, drive them from their native land!"

The rifle division, receiving a strip of one kilometer for the offensive, lined up its regiments in two echelons, the rifle regiment put three battalions one at the back of the head of the other. Only after fighting for more than a year, they figured out:

"Thus, the Soviet rifle division, "built for the offensive, had 8 rifle companies out of 27 in the first echelon of the attack. The remaining 19 companies, located behind the first echelon to a depth of 2 km, cover the battlefield with continuous battle formations and completely lose the ability to use

their firepower.

As a result of this, we have, firstly, exceptionally large, unjustified losses in personnel and firepower from enemy artillery, mortar and aircraft fire, which are carried, first of all, by subunits of the second and third echelons even before they enter the battle, in view of which the offensive often bogs down in our country at the very first stage, and secondly, the forced inactivity of more than a third of all infantry weapons of the division ...

At the same time, units of the second and third echelons, taking on the main fire of mortars, artillery and enemy aircraft, in order not to suffer heavy losses, are forced to cling to the echelons in front, and then, for the same reason, merge into their battle formations. And this leads to the inevitable mixing of the battle formations of the first echelon with the subsequent ones, to turning them into a crowd and making it impossible to control them.

Let's put detachments behind and get the famous "Russian attack". For the enemy, such tactics are just a gift, because the Germans considered the main thing to be not the seizure of territory, but the destruction of manpower. But it is in vain to look for at least some "reflections" on Zhukov's battle tactics. He simply believed that "everything" should be a lot.

In a conversation with Marshal Shaposhnikov on September 14, Georgy Konstantinovich complained that he received only 268 aircraft on the Leningrad Front. At the same time, he somehow "forgot" 287 vehicles of the Baltic Fleet (including 170 fighters, 61 bombers and attack aircraft) and almost 300 fighters of the 7th Air Corps, which were regularly involved in covering the battle formations of the front troops and delivering assault strikes.

From July to December 1941, Leningrad enterprises produced 713 tanks, 480 armored vehicles, 58 armored trains and armored platforms, over 3 thousand regimental and anti-tank guns, about 10 thousand mortars, over 3 million shells and mines. All this fell to the front almost instantly. From the end of August, by decision of the GKO, all armored products remained at the disposal of the Leningrad Front.

80

Therefore, having irrevocably lost 273 tanks and 55 armored vehicles in August, and 262 and 43 in September, by the beginning of October, the Lenfront had 339 tanks (half of which were KV and T-34) and 162 armored vehicles. On the basis of the 1st Red Banner Tank Division, the 123rd separate tank brigade (46 KV tanks) was formed, on the basis of the 24th tank division and other units - the 124th and 125th tank brigades. The latter differed in the composition of weapons, it had 26 KV-type vehicles and 11 self-propelled 76-mm installations based on the T-26 tank. In September, seven separate tank battalions of direct infantry support were also created.

To assist the ground forces, the Baltic Fleet allocated 345 naval artillery barrels of caliber from 100 to 406 mm, which in September fired over 25,000 shells at the enemy. The air defense system of Leningrad included 349 naval anti-aircraft guns. 68 thousand left the ships for the land front

sailors.

The German command clearly understood the importance of the fleet, especially large artillery ships in the defense of Leningrad. In connection with this, in the second half of September it undertook an air operation to destroy the naval forces based in Kronstadt. For the 2nd attack aviation squadron of the Luftwaffe, commanded by Colonel Oscar Dinort, warships became the main goal.

The first attack on Kronstadt was made by a group of fifteen Ju-87 bombers on 19 September. Then massive raids were undertaken on 21, 22, 23 and 27 September. They were accompanied by artillery shelling of ships stationed on the Neva, in the seaport, in the sea channel. Numerous Soviet anti-aircraft guns responded with dense barrage fire. The most titled al-bombardier of the Third Reich, Hans Rudel, recalled: "The defense was simply deadly, nowhere else during the war did I see anything like it." But nothing could stop the pilots of the "pieces", veterans of the Polish, French, Balkan campaigns and the battle for Crete.

As a result, they sank the Minsk leader, the Steregushchiy destroyer, the Whirlwind patrol ship, the M-74 submarine, minesweepers No. 31,33 and 53, transport and tugboat with direct bomb hits. The battleship Oktyabrskaya Revolutsiya, into which dive-bombers slammed six bombs, the cruiser Kirov, the destroyers Strong, Proud and Grozyaschiy, and a number of other ships and vessels were damaged.

At the battleship "Marat" as a result of the hit of two 500-kilogram bombs, the detonation of ammunition followed. The explosion tore off the entire bow up to the 52nd frame, along with a multi-tiered superstructure and the first chimney. The rest lay on the ground in the Kronstadt harbor. 326 crew members were killed, including the commander of the ship, Captain 2nd Rank P.K. Ivanov and first mate captain 3rd rank V.S. Chufistov. Nevertheless, the hull of the former battleship, cut off by a third, devoid of both movement and combat capability, continued to be listed as a "battleship" in the fleet lists until September 1951, when it was officially called a "non-self-propelled training vessel".

81

Even such an incorrigible optimist as Admiral Tributs admitted that the Baltic Fleet suffered heavy losses. Only one Marshal Zhukov, who managed to be both the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of Defense, but until the end of his life and did not understand why the fleet was needed at all, and who apparently believed that the cruiser was something like a floating armored train, authoritatively stated in his memoirs : "no significant damage was done to the fleet."

More understandable in the sense of the propaganda war is the message of the Soviet information bureau of September 24th. In response to the surprisingly accurate summary of the German command about the success of their aviation, they issued a rollicking refutation under the heading "Fascist nonsense about Soviet losses":

"He's lying - he doesn't remember himself," says a Russian proverb. So it happened with

Hitler's nonsense. There is no need to say that the Nazis did not sink any "ships of the Soviet fleet" and did not set fire to Soviet ships.

However, all the propaganda of army political workers in the first period of the war was remarkable for its amazing stupidity. Here is a typical example of their writings: The Faptist fable is nonsense in butter; Hitler's soldiers are lousy, Goebbels' reports are false,

The German agitation was distinguished by the same oakiness: "Beat the political officer of the Jew, the muzzle asks for a brick." L. Osipova correctly noted: "Both our party members and the Germans are exactly the same in terms of narrowness of outlook and general illiteracy. Only the Germans are fatter and the collars are cleaner."

On September 25, Field Marshal von Leeb was forced to inform Berlin that he could not continue the offensive with the available forces. The next day, he expressed doubts about the ability of the 39th motorized corps to hold Shlisselburg and described the situation as a crisis. Most of the German formations lost 60-70% of their people and equipment near Leningrad, losing the opportunity to conduct further offensive operations to capture the city.

On September 26, Marshal Kulik, who declared that the Mga station could not be taken with cash forces, was recalled to Moscow, and the 54th Army was subordinated to the Leningrad Front. Its commander was a Zhukovsky nominee, Lieutenant General M.S. Khozin.

On September 29, German aviation stopped raids on Kronstadt facilities, leaving them at the mercy of artillery. By that time, the Baltic Fleet had halved in terms of the number of combat units: 1 battleship (Marat), 1 cruiser (Petropavlovsk), 1 leader (Minsk), 13 destroyers, 20 submarines, 4 patrol ships, 1 minelayer and 26 minesweepers sank.

Thus ended the first and only assault on the city. He was recaptured at a high cost. From August 23 to September 30, the total losses of the troops of the Leningrad Front amounted to 116 thousand people, of which 65 thousand were irretrievable. The enemy - the advancing side - lost at least five times less. But appointed

82

Leebom's ball at the Astoria Hotel had to be cancelled.

In fact, Hitler, given the experience of the battles for Madrid and Warsaw, from the very beginning was an opponent of a direct assault. He believed that street fighting in a metropolis turned into a fortress, divided into centers of resistance, having a developed network of underground communications, many canals and solid stone buildings equipped with firing points, sniper positions, adapted for all-round defense, covered with barriers and mine traps, where in an alley, even an untrained fighter needs a bottle of Molotov cocktail to burn down a tank or an armored vehicle — such battles can grind not only divisions, but entire corps.

The Fuhrer thought in terms of modern warfare, and in this sense he was absolutely right, but only theoretically, because there was none of this in Leningrad. Not only in the summer-autumn of 1941, but before the battles for Stalingrad, the Red Army did not know how to fight in the city and did not conduct street battles. All cities - Minsk, Riga, Kyiv, Smolensk and many others - after the fall of the field lines, she surrendered without a fight, taking out or destroying material values. Their defense was not provided for by Soviet military doctrine and charters. In the same way, no fortification work was carried out in Leningrad to turn it into a giant fortified area; it was not a fortress. In September 1941, von Leeb had a real, and as subsequent events showed, the only chance to capture the city.

But the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1945 did not start any blockades and put 360 thousand people in Berlin, lost 2000 tanks. Was he worth it?

G.K. Zhukov was lucky, and the glory of the savior of Leningrad stuck to him. This fame justified everything: extrajudicial executions, and draconian orders, and the "wasteful" method of warfare.

Air Marshal Alexander Evgenyevich Golovanov (1904-1975), in post-war conversations with the writer F.I. Chuev admired Zhukov's firmness and his leadership qualities: "It was not for nothing that Stalin sent him to Leningrad instead of Voroshilov, and he, using force there, did it! After all, he shot there entire retreating our battalions! He, like Voroshilov, did not run with a pistol in his hand, did not lead the fighters himself into the attack, but set up a machine-gun barrier - and on the retreating, on his own! But I will say that in his place, I would have done exactly the same if the fate of the country is being decided.

From the foregoing, it can be assumed that whole battalions fled from the front, throwing their weapons, and Zhukov, loyal to the oath, "returned confidence to the troops" and "saved the country" with machine-gun barriers. In fact, this is how the remnants of units that retreated after another unsuccessful suicidal attack on some "hillock" were shot. No wonder the front-line writer Viktor Petrovich Astafiev (1924-2002) in his correspondence with the writer Vyacheslav Leonidovich Kondratiev (1920-1993) called this "commander of victory" "a poacher of the Russian people"*.

83

* See the novel by V.P. Astafiev "Cursed and killed", received in 1995 State Prize of the Russian Federation.

At the same time, it was somehow "forgotten" that Zhukov was sent to Leningrad with a completely different task. —
break the blockade, and that he did not solve this problem.

The Leningrad defensive operation ended, the 18th German army began to dig into the ground. A complete blockade was never established. Army Group "North" not only failed to capture Leningrad, but also ended up for a long time

chained to him. At the same time, Reinhardt's divisions did not play a special role in the Moscow direction either: "It turned out to be an almost ten-day delay in the redeployment of the Hoepner group to the south - and this is the 8 time when even a day began to take on great importance. And when the German tanks left Leningrad, they were unable to fight. They needed Restoration, replenishment and rest. In other words, they needed time."

In the battle on the distant and near approaches to Leningrad, the Soviet side threw 65 divisions, more than 700 thousand people. By September 30, the losses amounted to almost half - 345 thousand commanders and Red Army soldiers (killed, wounded, captured, missing), of which 214 thousand were irretrievable. In addition, the enemy destroyed or captured 1,492 tanks, 9,885 guns and mortars, and 1,702 aircraft. At the cost of these losses, Leningrad closed the way for the Wehrmacht in the northwestern sector of the Soviet-German front.

84

Chapter 5

(October - December 1941)

The position of the besieged Leningrad and the troops defending it worsened all the time. The huge city, as well as the front, needed the timely supply of food, ammunition and other types of support.

The Wehrmacht used the proximity of the front line to residential areas for the methodical barbaric extermination of the population and the destruction of the city. Long-range cannons were drawn up near Leningrad, and a special group of siege artillery was created. The directive of 29 September states:

"The Fuhrer decided to wipe the city of Petersburg from the face of the earth. After the defeat of Soviet Russia, there is no interest in the continued existence of this large settlement. Finland, in the same way, declared her disinterest in the continued existence of the city directly at her new border ... If, as a result of the situation in the city, requests for sweets are made, they will be rejected.

On October 7, the head of the operations department of the OKW, General Alfred Jodl, informed the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch, that the surrender of Moscow and Leningrad could not be accepted: "We should expect great fears from epidemics. Therefore, no German soldier should enter the 6th city. Whoever leaves the city against our lines must be driven back by fire ... It is unacceptable to risk the life of a German soldier to save Russian cities from fire, just as it is impossible to feed them at the expense of the German homeland.

Soviet historians write that Goebbels, in order to justify this action, was instructed to present to the world community a certain "Russian plan", according to which the Soviet authorities themselves intended to destroy Leningrad. But allegedly even the Minister of Imperial Propaganda failed to concoct such a fake.

I think that Goebbels did not need to fabricate anything - he knew.

The position of the parties on the Leningrad front two weeks before the assault (August 21, 1941)

As early as September 6 (Stalin approved the "Action Plan in the event of a forced withdrawal from Leningrad by ships and vessels", which provided for the total destruction of the Baltic Fleet, the destruction "with the maximum degree" and for the longest possible period of shipyards, berths, warehouses and port facilities, blockage of fairways "conspiratorial" mining of objects began, which, of course, was known to all sailors. Some suggested not to blow up ships, but to be interned in Sweden. ships of the Baltic Fleet". The destruction and flooding of the "objects" was to begin at the signal "Chrysanthemum".

85

Well, it's clear with the fleet, lowering the flag in the face of the enemy is shameful. Although Churchill, fearing that the Germans would get the warships, even offered Stalin compensation for their sinking. But on September 13, Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Vsevolod Nikolayevich Merkulov (1900-1953), authorized by the State Defense Committee "for special cases", received a mandate to inspect preparations for the destruction of enterprises, bridges, large buildings and other "important structures".

Of course, no explosives would have been enough for the entire city, but more than 58,000 city facilities, the entire rolling stock, all stationary power units and installations, railway depots, telegraph and telephone stations, water utility installations, and much more were to be destroyed.

Sitting on the dock in Nuremberg, General Jodl testified that the "barbarism of the Russians" was one of the reasons for the reluctance of the German command to send troops to Leningrad:

"Shortly before that, the Russian troops left Kyiv, and as soon as we occupied the city, explosions of monstrous force began in it one after another. Most of the inner city burned down, 50 thousand people were left homeless, German soldiers suffered significant losses, as large masses of explosives were blown up ... The order pursued only one goal - to protect German troops from such disasters, because in Kharkov and Kiev whole headquarters."

By the way, our military literature is very proud of these "special operations", during which Colonel Starinov's powerful radio high explosives were used for the first time, silent about the fact that not a specific building of the enemy headquarters, but the entire Khreshchatyk, flew into the air. By the way, radio signals also rushed from Leningrad to the cities left to the Germans: for example, in August, "three largest buildings" in Struga Krasny were blown up, under which sappers had laid 250-kilogram charges in advance.

In the city on the Neva, 325 tons of explosives were placed under the "objects". Admiral Tributs told Admiral Panteleev: "If the enemy breaks into the city, he will die under its ruins." Residents, of course, were not informed about the details of the secret operation. The police officers, who found explosives and detonators in the cellars during the operational-search activities, were ordered to "pay no attention."

So it turns out that Hitler thought about victory, Stalin took measures in case of defeat, but the thoughts of both dictators flowed in the same direction: both doomed the city and its inhabitants to death. "If all this is true," the writer Daniil Granin commented on the first publications about Operation D, "it becomes clear why the city authorities did not stock up on food supplies. They were busy mining."

And why did Goebbels have to invent something if the Abwehr, after analyzing the materials of interrogations of prisoners of war, reported: September 21: "Large-scale mining of the city was carried out", October 2: "They report that it is planned to undermine the most important objects. The city has powerful

86

explosive devices." October 6: "Businesses, bridges, and apparently also sewers are reportedly mined and prepared for explosion by representatives of the central authorities."

October 24th. Report of the chief of security police: "According to a credible engineer, a number of high-rise buildings on International Avenue are equipped with explosive charges. The intention to barricade the city in the event of the entry of German troops by blowing up these buildings is confirmed.

Another tale from those that Zhukov generously fed to the writer Konstantin Simonov after the war is about how he saved the Baltic Fleet: "Arriving in Leningrad, I immediately got to a meeting of the Military Council. The sailors discussed the question in what order they should tear up the ships so that the Germans would not get them. I said to the commander of the fleet, Tributs: "Here is my mandate," and handed him a note written by Comrade Stalin, where my powers were defined.

As commander of the front, I forbid you this. Firstly, if you please, clear the ships so that they do not explode themselves, and secondly, bring them closer to the city so that they can fire all their artillery. They, you see, were discussing the issue of mining ships, and on them, on these ships, there were forty rounds of ammunition. I told them: "How can ships be mined at all? Yes, they might die. But if so, then they should only die in battle, shooting.

Any naval sailor understands that the words about "forty ammunition on ships" are just nonsense. However, it's not about them. Our military historians, as a rule, retired colonels, who perceive Zhukov's Memoirs and Reflections as a Bible for the military, are touched by Zhukov's adherence to principles: "Zhukov, in essence, canceled Stalin's decision.

The latter learned about it from A.A. Zhdanov. However, the Supreme Commander could not help but appreciate the courage and foresight of the new commander of the front and made it clear that let him remain as Zhukov decided.

No matter how! On September 20, a report from the head of the 3rd department of the KBF fell on Zhukov's desk: "Preparation for a special operation to destroy watercraft and combat units is proceeding very disorganized ... On September 18 of this year, unexpectedly, the Tulip signal was given to the fleet, which Su, established for special operations, means to stop carrying out destruction activities.

It soon became clear that this signal was given according to the table of artillery negotiations, meaning an immediate ceasefire. The preparations for the special operation, on the one hand, in most cases were passed over to minor people, and on the other hand, received wide publicity. As a result of this, the presence of negative sentiments that predetermine the sad outcome of the defense of Leningrad was noted.

And here is the resolution of the front commander on this document:

"T. Isakov.

87

v. Urgently investigate, arrest provocateurs.

2. Report why such responsible work is going criminally badly. ZHUKOV".

So the "far-sighted and courageous" Georgy Konstantinovich "cancelled" Stalin's decisions. It is curious what would happen if the gunners gave some kind of hard signal, for example, "Chrysanthemum"?

Many Leningraders learned about these preparations, you can't hide an awl in a bag. Knowledge of the facts that the "comrade commissars" were systematically preparing the destruction of their native city fueled the delusions of many Leningraders about the intentions of the Nazis. They did not believe the reports of the slanderous Soviet propaganda about the atrocities perpetrated in the occupied territories and naively considered the Germans a "cultural nation". But in any case, the Leningraders "had nowhere to go." All that was left was to fight and survive.

By October, the Germans abandoned the idea of taking the city by storm and switched to positional fighting. But even when tank formations stopped operating near Leningrad, and aviation activity dropped sharply, Zhukov continued to counterattack in the Pulkovo and Peterhof areas.

At the end of September, he decided to organize a general offensive. The main blow was to be delivered by the 55th Army, consisting of six divisions and two tank brigades. Moreover, with the right flank, she was supposed to free Pushkin and Slutsk, and with the left -

go to Tosno and, in cooperation with Khozin's army, advancing with four divisions, encircle and destroy the enemy's Mgin grouping.

On the right wing of the front, the 42nd and 8th armies were to strike with six divisions and one brigade in the direction of Znamenka - Uritsk - New Peterhof. To help the infantry advancing head-on on the fortified area created by the Germans, Zhukov wanted to land amphibious assault forces on the southern coast of the Neva Bay. During their planning, Rear Admiral Yuri Fedorovich Rall (1890-1948), Chief of Staff of the Fleet, spoke in favor of landing, but only with the support of naval artillery. The front commander did not agree with this, arguing that the preliminary processing of bridgeheads would unmask the landing. That's what they decided on.

The landings were landed at the command of the front headquarters, suddenly both for the Germans and for the command of the Leningrad naval base, which they had to organize without preparation, without preliminary reconnaissance, in the complete absence of information about the enemy. Just in the evening, the commander of the front summoned Admiral Panteleev to himself and, pointing a pencil at the map, ordered: "Here, land a company of sailors towards the forty-second army. Do not invent any landing operations there. Act quickly and discreetly. Move the company to me, and that's it."

On October 1, the 44th Rifle Division of the 42nd Army, together with the 6th Naval Brigade

88

infantry and the 124th tank brigade again began fighting for Uritsk, Staro-Panovo, Ivanovka, Sosnovaya Polyana. Major-General Zaitsev's 13th division was in active combat operations near Kiskino and Verkhneye Koyeroovo. At the same time, behind enemy lines, in Peterhof and Strelna, detachments formed from a company of marines of the 6th brigade were landed. The paratroopers successfully advanced into the depths of the coastal strip, however, without receiving the support of the ground forces and without communication, they died.

On the night of October 3, boats guarding the water area of the Leningrad Naval Base "transported" and landed a reinforced company from the same 6th Marine Brigade to the east of the Pishmash plant in Strelna. The landing force landed safely, deepened into the territory occupied by the enemy, then was surrounded and completely killed.

The 8th Army, marking time, received an order to organize an offensive by October 5 with the forces of the 10th and 11th rifle divisions and a separate tank battalion in order to destroy the enemy in the Troitsk, Peterhof area.

On the night before the offensive, a detachment of 498 fighters led by Colonel A.T. was landed in New Peterhof. Vorozhilov and Commissioner A.V. Petrukhin, formed from ship commanders, electricians, miners of battleships, instructors from training detachment schools, cadets of the naval political school. The landing party was supposed to cut the enemy's Peterhof wedge, facilitating the connection of the troops of the 8th and 42nd armies. But!

Zhukov wrote in his memoirs with surprise: "Somehow, the enemy discovered the landing approach by sea and met him with fire while still on the water. The sailors were not embarrassed by enemy fire. They got ashore, and the Germans ran. Carried away by the first successes, the sailors pursued the fleeing enemy, but by morning they themselves were cut off from the sea.

In a three-day battle, the paratroopers perished to the last man, paying in full for Zhukovsky's love for quick successes. On the night of October 6 and 8, in the Strelna area - the Pishmash plant, landings formed from units of the 20th division of the NKVD landed, with the same result, since the offensive of the 8th and 42nd armies failed, barely starting, due to significant losses in personnel. In the latter case, the command of the LenVMB nevertheless tried to "invent an operation" and applied for air support for the landing. However, the headquarters of the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet did not accept the application.

Admiral V.F. Tributs consoles us all: "But the paratroopers gave their

Commissar General A.D. sings along with him. Okorokov: "The landing forces, although they could not fully fulfill their tasks, because we were unable to connect with them, nevertheless inflicted significant losses on the enemy."

What kind of "loss" and what was the "damage" - none of the 1811 paratroopers will tell us anymore !!!

89

During the operation, the 124th tank regiment of Major Lukasik was also completely killed. Tankers, advancing from the direction of Leningrad, on October 8 allegedly "broke through" the enemy defenses. In reality, the Germans, having missed the heavy KV, cut off the Soviet infantry with fire. Having reached the area of Strelna, the regiment received the task of searching for the missing troops. A day later, it was destroyed, only three people left the encirclement.

From the mouth of the Tosna to Yam-Izhora, the 168th, 86th and 125th and 268th rifle divisions of the 55th Army, which arrived from the Oranienbaum bridgehead at the end of September, continued to storm the anti-tank ditch and the village of Ivanovskoye. A new offensive was planned for October 3. General V.P. Sviridov recalls: "The time allotted for preparation was completely insufficient, and the headquarters could not meet it. But, when the commander of one of the divisions reported on the unavailability of his units and asked for a delay, the commander of the 55th Army, General I.T. Lazarev answered: "Comrade Stalin knows about the hour of the offensive, and I will not postpone the operation. Report it yourself if you want."

There was nothing to object to such a weighty argument. Again, in turn, without the support of artillery and without interaction among themselves, regiments and battalions attacked.

Yu.I. Smolensky, a former adjutant of the 3rd battalion of the 330th regiment of the 86th rifle division: "The battalion commander gave me a task: a newly arrived replenishment

from the Kazakhs to rewrite the company and platoon and breed in places. Something terrible began: the Kazakhs do not speak Russian, and I do not perceive their names by ear. Somehow rewrote, some put only numbers. Scattered in places. Swamp, snow, night. You can not dig - water immediately appears. The soldiers lie between the bumps, where the front line is unclear.

Order in the morning: following in the second echelon, cross Tosna; the first echelon was almost completely destroyed. On the shore and in the water - a lot of corpses, ours and German. There are no floats. / And the truth is, how much that Tosna is, only 120 meters /. They swam - who is on a log, who is like. / "If only one bitch commander tried to sail under fire on these" handy means "- wrote Viktor Astafiev /.

We overcame Tosna, got out on a steep bank to the German trenches. The Germans ran. Our, hungry, instead of gaining a foothold, began to "trophy" in the officers' dugouts: there is wine, there is food. The Germans, meanwhile, came to their senses and went on a counterattack. Now we ran - back for Tosna. Again we are on our shore, in a swamp. Overcoats are wet, there is nowhere to dry, you can't build a fire ...

Recalls D.V. Ivanov, former assistant chief of staff of the 947th joint venture of the 268th Division: "On September 30, 41, we arrived at the station by night march. Pontonnaya and received an order on the move, without reconnaissance and artillery preparation, to attack the enemy, who had come to the western bank of the river. Tosny. The battle began at dawn on October 1 in difficult marshy terrain. The German firing points were not suppressed, and our attacks were not successful. The actions of small aviation were also ineffective and could not help the infantry.

90

During the first three days of fighting, we lost 50% of our personnel, wounded and killed. The offensive continued until October 13, but it was not possible to succeed.

On October 14, the division took up defense along the river. Bolshaya Izhorka for 5 km ... The enemy did not take offensive actions, but constantly fired, and we lost 15-20 people a day from his fire.

On October 22, our offensive began on the village of Ust-Tosno. Artillery preparation was carried out with 76-mm cannons of the 1902/30 type, which were not able to destroy enemy firing points - both in time and in the number of projectiles fired. Each time during the attack, German pillboxes and bunkers came to life and opened heavy fire on the attackers.

On November 3, units of the 70th and 90th SDs relieved us. They were given the same task: to capture the village of Ust-Tosno and cross to the eastern bank of the river.

And here is what Colonel V.L. Zinoviev, former head of the operational department of the headquarters of the 125th Infantry Division, Major General P.P. Bogaichuk: "The enemy, who captured the anti-tank ditch, occupied a more advantageous position than the units and units of our formation. Adapting the moat to

defense, the Nazis dominated the area. And the trenches of our front line passed through an open, unprotected field, a valley. She was shot through by all types of weapons to a great depth. The valley boiled from enemy artillery and mortar fire, shot through by machine-gun and automatic bursts, sowed death. We had to put up with the fact that we did not have a more reliable and advantageous position, because behind our backs were Kolpino, the Izhora plant, and Leningrad.

..Having captured the central part of the moat, we triumphed early. Before dawn, the fascists opened such cannon-mortar fire on the overpass and our rear that the sky was hot. And from the side of the railway track and Yam-Izhora, machine guns fired on the flanks of the shock group. In a few minutes, so many shells and mines were fired at us that it seemed that there was no living place left. The shock group of the 466th regiment and the company of fighters sent to help it by the commander of the army left the anti-tank ditch at night.

Everything remains the same.

No one gave the order to seize the anti-tank ditch. It was the initiative of our division commander, approved by the commander of the 55th Army. Now, when the Nazis again occupied the moat, the order of the high command followed: to return the moat at all costs! And those responsible for the loss of the moat must be punished!

And the trial began ... Searches were conducted for the perpetrators of the surrender of the moat. The divisional prosecutor's office joined this thankless job. She found a "specific culprit." The commander of the 466th Infantry Regiment, Major Kozin, was handed over to the tribunal ... After that, a saying was born in the division: "There would be a military tribunal, but there will always be culprits."

91

... Since the shock group of Major Kozin first took the anti-tank ditch, it began to pass from hand to hand. At night or before dawn, we took it, and in the morning the Nazis captured the moat. So it was in October, so it was later.

The 125th Rifle Division lost over 5,000 men in October.

In the second half of the month, the 86th and 168th rifle divisions were transferred from the Tosnensky line to the Neva Dubrovka. The 70th, 85th (former 2nd DNO), 43rd and 90th divisions and the 7th Marine Brigade arrived to replace them. They were given the same task: to take an anti-tank ditch, capture Ust-Tosno and cross to the eastern bank of the river.

On the German side in this direction, all the same 122nd and right-flank regiments of the 121st Infantry Division were on the defensive.

The total losses of the 55th Army in October amounted to 17,235 soldiers and commanders.

On October 6, Army General Zhukov was recalled to the Western Front to save Moscow. The command of the Leningrad Front was taken by Major General I.I. Fedlyuninsky, the 42nd Army was headed by the former commander of the 10th Rifle Corps, Major General I.F. Nikolaev.

The forces of the Army Group "North" in early October were dispersed in several operational areas. German troops fought on the front south of Lake Ilmen, along the Volkhov and Neva rivers, on the southern approaches to Leningrad, against Soviet troops on the Oranienbaum bridgehead and the Moon Sund Islands. Unable to create a powerful enough strike force to storm Leningrad, the Germans, as already mentioned, decided to destroy the city with artillery fire and air strikes, and starve its defenders to death.

In order to finally deprive Leningrad of communication with the country, the German command, on the initiative of Field Marshal Leeb, returned to the idea of a complete blockade in early October. The idea was to break the resistance of the Soviet troops on the Volkhov and, with a strike through Tikhvin to the Svir River, cut off land communications to Lake Ladoga, thereby depriving Leningrad and the troops defending it of the last opportunity to receive assistance on this lake and at the same time, uniting with the Karelian army of the Finns, with a united front to form the outer ring of the blockade.

Hitler first expressed this idea on October 1, at the very beginning of the attack on Moscow. But the operation of the Army Group North was postponed until it became possible to concentrate a sufficient number of infantry here and replenish the mobile troops with people and materiel. By a directive of October 7, the Wehrmacht high command reaffirmed the previously set task to destroy Leningrad and exterminate its population.

In the first half of October, the 250th

92

the infantry division of the Spanish Falangist volunteers, the 212th and 227th infantry divisions from France, the 7th parachute division from Greece and the 2nd SS infantry brigade from Germany. Now the von Leeb group consisted of 33 divisions and 2 brigades. The aircraft fleet of the 1st Air Fleet had 250 aircraft.

For an offensive in the Svir direction, the enemy allocated the 39th motorized, 1st and 38th army corps. The remaining forces of the 16th Army were involved south of Lake Ilmen, while the 18th Army held the Mgin'sk ledge and fought on the southern approaches to Leningrad.

Soviet troops in the northwestern direction occupied the following position: the 7th separate army opposed the Karelian army of the Finns along the Svir River, and the 23rd army of the Leningrad Front on the Karelian Isthmus along the old state border opposed the troops of the South-Eastern Army of the Finns.

The 42nd and 55th armies defended the southern approaches to Leningrad; Nevskaya

The operational group operated to the east along the northern bank of the Neva, and the 54th Army took up defenses along the eastern face of the Mginsky ledge.

The 8th Army held the coastal bridgehead in the Oranienbaum area; The 8th separate rifle brigade continued to defend the Hanko Peninsula, while the 3rd separate rifle brigade and naval units fought on the Moonsund Islands. South of the 54th Army, the 4th and 52nd separate armies, subordinate directly to the Headquarters, and the Novgorod Army Group of the North-Western

front.

The Soviet command, in turn, planned a propssti operation to de-blockade the city. Its plan was approved by the Stavka on October 14. The purpose of the operation was to encircle and destroy the Schlisselburg-Sinyavino grouping of the enemy with counter "rapid" strikes of the 54th, 55th armies and the Neva operational group in the general direction of Sinyavino by the end of the second day and restore the land connection of Leningrad with the country. The Baltic Fleet began to carry out the transfer of six divisions from the Oranienbaum bridgehead.

The Military Council of the Leningrad Front determined the start of the operation on October 20. To participate in it, 10 rifle divisions, 2 rifle and 4 tank brigades were involved - a total of 70 thousand people, 475 guns (for some reason this figure is given in the sources without taking into account reinforcement artillery and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet), 160 tanks. The Air Force of the Leningrad Front had 225 serviceable aircraft, the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet - 134.

The enemy, according to Soviet data, had about 54 thousand people and 450 guns in the Sinyavino direction. He relied on a strong defense with a large number of engineering structures built in a wooded and swampy area, covered with mine-explosive and wire barriers.

On the night of September 19-20, on the orders of Zhukov, part of the Neva Operational Group, commanded by Lieutenant General P.S. Pshennikov, - the 115th Infantry Division, the NKVD Battalion and the 4th Marine Brigade - on

93

fishing punts collected along the entire right bank, pleasure boats and home-made rafts delivered from the city covertly, without loss, crossed the Neva and occupied a bridgehead on the left bank in the area of \u200b\u200bMoscow

Dubrovka.

But further progress was stopped by stubborn resistance and counterattacks by units of the 20th motorized division with the 426th regiment of the 126th and 287th regiment of the 96th infantry division attached to it. Hastily conceived, organized in one day, the attack on MGU failed, however, there was no way back: the command of the front and the group all the time demanded active action, invariably setting tasks

"take over" and "purify". The units were melting away in daily attacks, but success did not come.

On the night of September 20, in the Shlisselburg area, the 1st division of the NKVD tried to cross the river. Colonel Donskov, counting on surprise, decided to organize the crossing at night, not to carry out artillery preparation before it began. Apparently, for the sake of preserving military secrets, reconnaissance of the left bank of the Neva was also not carried out, and the enemy's fire system was not detected. At the same time, they neglected the training of personnel in landing and disembarking and the use of watercraft. Despite such secrecy, the Germans timely discovered the beginning of the crossing and shot down the first two echelons of rifle regiments on the water with hurricane fire. The third echelons had nothing to cross the water barrier, and there was no need to: there was no surprise.

On September 26, having obtained motor boats, Donskov decided to land the least affected 2nd Infantry Regiment directly on the Shlisselburg pier. At 6 o'clock in the morning, the lion's companies of the first echelon broke into the northwestern outskirts of the city, started a battle and went missing, and the boats were burned by the enemy on their return.

The Ladoga military flotilla tried to provide all possible assistance to the Chekists in capturing Shlisselburg, during the period from September 19 to October 2, it made five attempts to land troops on the coast. In this case, the land authorities, due to mediocrity of execution and indifference to the lives of their subordinates, socialistically competed with the naval authorities. Zhukov believed that the stormy Ladoga was not a hindrance to the Soviet "Marimans", the admirals answered "yes", without any preparation they put assault groups on ships and threw them into the surf before reaching the shore.

As a result, most of the landing force - 105 cadets of the Naval Border School, 40 naval divers, 44 soldiers of the guard company - were simply drowned. In the report on the results of the combat activities of the flotilla, Captain 1st Rank V.S. Cherokov wrote about the Shlisselburg landings:

"They were not successfully completed due to the fact that they were carried out hastily, without taking into account the meteorological situation. The experience of landing operations showed the need for preliminary navigational reconnaissance, the production of more reliable navigation support. It is no longer possible for the landing troops to have to walk on water for about 3 kilometers (!), Spending 2-2.5 hours on this, as was the case during the operation at Shlisselburg, although there were opportunities to avoid this.

94

Well, you must! On German maps, this largest body of water in Europe is called the "Ladoga Sea", in a storm the wave here reaches 8 points (!), The prevailing depths are 35-140 meters. I wonder how the paratroopers, hung with weapons, walked "on the water"? One of the survivors explained - up to the neck.

At the end of September, an attempt was also made by the forces of the 10th Infantry Brigade to cross the Neva in the Otradnoye area and seize another bridgehead, but it turned out even worse. After a three-day battle, almost the entire brigade died along with

his commander, Colonel V.N. Fedorov. Georgy Konstantinovich became very angry, dismissed General Shpennikov and appointed General V.F. Konkov with an invariable parting word: "The task is the same - more activity."

On the left bank, only the Nevsky Piglet, known for the courage of its defenders and the incredible number of casualties, was able to catch on - a piece of land about one and a half kilometers along the front, 700-800 meters deep. The entire bridgehead and approaches to it on the western bank of the river were viewed by the enemy and were under constant artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire. Soviet troops died on the approach to the Neva, and during the crossing, and on the bridgehead itself, which was literally plowed up by shells and mines.

The German command, having reinforced the 20th motorized division with units of the 8th tank division, made efforts to eliminate the "piglet", but on September 22 it was forced to "recognize the presence of a bridgehead on the Nevsky Front." The Russians fought to the death. On September 24, a representative of the Wehrmacht high command, General Paulus, arrived at the Zorn command post to hear: "The division has given up its last forces, and it is no longer capable of offensive operations. The entire cast needs a few days to rest."

Paulus agreed, exhausted and reduced by a third, the 20th motorized division was replaced by the 96th infantry division of General Schele. At the end of September, units of the 7th Airborne Division began to arrive from the Mediterranean Sea to the Nevsky Front, and they immediately felt that Crete was not here for them.

A German military historian writes: "September 30, superbly armed paratroopers, who had enthusiastically arrived at the Nevsky Front the day before, began to return in ambulances. Their mood changed dramatically. "It's better to skydive to Crete three times than to spend one day in Russia!" they said. Obviously, in such a critical assessment of the situation, the lack of experience of the soldiers to fight on land affected.

Machine guns, rifles, hand grenades, butts, sapper shovels and bayonets were the weapons with which the soldiers rushed at each other from both sides. The terrible outcome of these battles remains in the memory of the former German paratroopers even decades later.

In the course of stubborn battles, the two front edges became so close that in moments of calm it was possible to hear the conversation and coughing of enemy soldiers every day.

95

the Germans spent up to 8000 grenades. Nevertheless, the German command succeeded in the main thing: the "piglet" was localized, shot down along with the places of crossings, lined with minefields, barbed wire and equipped positions.

But it was from here that General Fedyuninsky planned a strike towards General Khozin. On the "patch", equal in size to the defense area of the rifle

battalion, squeezed in four divisions and evacuated the headquarters of the already destroyed 4th brigade. New formations were concentrated and waited for their "turn" on the western coast.

For fire support of the troops, the fleet organized a special artillery group, which included 16 stationary and 6 railway batteries, 4 gunboats and 5 destroyers (these are just those barrels of not the smallest caliber that our historiography "does not take into account", just like an armored train "Stalinets 28", equipped with 100-mm naval guns and 120-mm mortars, or 152-mm howitzers of the RVGK regiments).

Engineers racked their brains over the problem of how to deliver heavy tanks to the bridgehead, considering the most exotic projects: EPRON specialists proposed dragging combat vehicles along the bottom with steel cables, metro builders undertook to dig a tunnel under the Neva, sailors advocated welded pontoons.

Occupying a 230-kilometer front from Lake Ladoga to Lake Ilmen, three Soviet armies and the Novgorod army group numbered 160 thousand people. Our military history also "does not take them into account", reporting that they were weak, understaffed and "defended at the frontiers". On the other hand, General G.E. Degtyarev, who arrived in the 4th Army as chief of artillery, paints a completely different picture: "The commander personally acquainted me with the area of the forthcoming operations, with the composition of the troops, with the tasks assigned to them. And these tasks, in essence, boiled down to one thing - to attack in order to break through the enemy blockade of Leningrad!

What follows is a detailed description of the energetic preparations for the offensive, which was to begin on October 18, that is, two days before the attacks of the Leningrad Front.

However, on October 16, Army Group North launched an offensive in the Tikhvin direction. The main blow of the motorized corps of the "hardened wolf" of General Schmidt, consisting of the 8th and 12th tank, 18th and 20th motorized divisions, delivered from the Volkhov bridgehead to Gruzino, Budogoshch, Tikhvin, Lodeinoe Pole. At the same time, the 11th and 21st Infantry Divisions launched an offensive along both banks of the Volkhov River in the direction of Volkhovstroy, and the 126th Infantry Division in the direction of Malaya Vishera.

The area on which the battle unfolded was defined by German topographers as "virtually unmapped", and the soldiers called it "brown jungle". Impenetrable forests, swamps, lack of roads - all this

96

in itself, it represented an insurmountable obstacle for the attacking side, limiting its maneuver and making the actions of mobile formations absolutely predictable.

And today in this area there are not many places where tanks can pass. Even 50 years later, the only communication linking Chudovo and Tikhvin

marked on the map as an unpaved one; almost parallel to it ran the Budogosh-Tikhvin railway line. The second communication line, Kirishi - Volkhov - Novaya Ladoga, ran along the left bank of the Volkhov River.

It would seem that under such conditions, having 16 divisions, one rifle and two tank brigades, 8 corps artillery regiments in the composition of four armies, it was possible to organize an insurmountable defense. But it happened differently: stretched into a thread without second echelons and reserves on the 130-kilometer line, the formations of the 4th and 52nd separate armies were unable to hold back the blow of the German fist.

They did not prepare for this, carried away by their upcoming "breakthrough", regardless of the intentions of the enemy, about which they had a little more information than about life on Mars: it seems that the Germans are still somewhere. General Degtyarev, for example, describes the check by the army headquarters of the readiness for the offensive of the 285th rifle division:

"At the division headquarters, short reports were heard from the heads of the operational and intelligence departments, and then the chief of staff of the division. All of them suffered from one drawback: too superficial judgments about the enemy, based on random facts ... In the end, General V.F. Yakovlev asked the division commander a question:

"And in what direction in your zone is the main blow of the enemy most likely"?

The divisional commander took a back seat and stared with some unseeing eyes at the map that lay in front of him. There was an awkward pause."

The pause was broken first by the enemy.

In general, the battle of the Wehrmacht with the Red Army during this period most of all resembles the fight of a lightweight boxer against a village bull. Flyer strikes are professionally accurate, they almost always hit the target, but are not devastating enough. A guy in Budyonovka can light up his jaw, but mostly he kneads the air with his fists, since he is blindfolded.

As a result...

By October 20, the Germans broke through the Soviet line of troops (it is hardly possible to call it a defense) and began to advance in three directions. On October 22 they captured Bollypaya Vishera, on October 23 - Budogoshch, on the 24th - Malaya Vishera. There was a threat of a breakthrough to Tikhvin. Troops of the 4th Army, Lieutenant General V.F. Yakovlev (285, 311, 292nd Rifle, 27th Cavalry Division, 119th Separate Tank Battalion) dissected into parts with billiard balls

rolled off in different directions.

After the war, analyzing the reasons for the defeat, Martal K.A. Meretskov writes: "A significant role in the failures of our troops was played by the fact that almost all units and formations of the 4th Army, including its headquarters, had no experience in combat operations in difficult conditions of wooded and swampy terrain. The headquarters lost control, the troops were defenseless against enemy air strikes. And the terrain was really difficult. Forests and swamps almost completely covered the space between the Volkhov River and Tikhvin. Numerous rivers and streams crossed the paths of the movement of troops. Settlements were rare. There were few roads, vast swamps did not freeze even in severe frosts.

It is difficult to argue with the marshal, but after all, the enemy had to overcome all this, because it was he who was advancing, and not the 4th Army. And where, it would be interesting to know, did the Germans have experience in combat operations in Russian swamps? In less than a year, our commanders will learn to fight in the Don steppes and the mountains of the Caucasus in exactly the same way. On what terrain was the Red Army preparing to conduct combat operations at all?

It was in such a situation that the offensive operation of the troops of the Leningrad Front began to unblock the city. On the Nevsky "patch" a "conveyor of death" was organized: divisions without tanks (across the river, despite all the searchlights, not a single vehicle could be transferred) and air cover alternately went into frontal attacks on heavily fortified heights. They lost most of the personnel, the remnants of the units were dug into the ground, after which a new division came to the bridgehead with the same task.

By the end of October, 4 divisions (115th, 86th, 265th rifle and 20th NKVD), having expanded the bridgehead by one kilometer along the front, all together had 1,500 fighters.

Fighting on the Tikhvin and Volkhov directions (October - November 1941)

To meet them along the shortest path, through swamps, peat extraction and the positions of two German divisions (126th and 227th), Khozin's 54th army (128, 310, 294, 286th rifle, 3rd and 4th guards, 21st tank divisions, 1st separate mountain rifle, 16th and 122nd tank brigades, two regiments of corps artillery). While the Soviet troops were breaking the blockade, striking along the shore of Lake Ladoga, to the south the Germans were moving towards Tikhvin, laying an external trap loop.

To eliminate the enemy's breakthrough in the Tikhvin direction, the Stavka allocated four divisions from the Leningrad Front, three from its reserve and one from the reserve of the North-Western Front.

Two rifle divisions from the 8th and 42nd armies (80th and 281st) were airlifted. In stormy weather, the Ladoga flotilla transported the 191st, 44th rifle divisions and the 6th separate marine brigade from the western to the eastern shore of the lake - about 21 thousand people, 129 guns, more than a hundred tanks, automaptin, tractors and about a thousand horses. Troops descending from

ships, immediately sent to the forefront and immediately entered into battle. The 92nd Infantry Division arrived in Tikhvin, and the 60th Tank Division began unloading.

The 310th and 4th Guards Divisions were transferred from the 54th Army to the Tikhvin direction. The 259th Rifle Division of the North-Western Front advanced to the line of the Malaya Vishera River. At the same time, the Headquarters demanded to continue active operations in the Sinyavino direction.

Arriving formations, without completing the concentration, immediately rushed in parts to counterattacks. They did not achieve much success, but by October 28, the troops of the 4th separate army suspended the enemy offensive 40 km southwest of Tikhvin, and the 52nd army east of Malaya Vishera.

At the end of October, according to Fedyuninsky, at his own request, he was transferred from the post of commander of the Leningrad Front to the 54th Army. General Khozin, respectively, led the front.

October 28, 1941 is considered the official date for the completion of the Sinyavino offensive operation of the 54th Army and the Neva Operational Group. The official losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 55 thousand people. The date is sucked from the finger: supposedly on this day the operation had to be stopped "because of the difficult situation in the Tikhvin direction." What happened after that did not receive any name, although the "conveyor" on the Nevsky patch worked continuously with increased "productivity", and everyone also went on the attack, but already under the leadership of Fedyuninsky, division of the 54th army.

There were good reasons for this. In the second half of October, the Germans were at the walls of Moscow. In giant "cauldrons" near Vyazma, the remnants of three Soviet fronts were destroyed at once, Mozhaisk and Maloyaroslavets fell. A state of siege was introduced in the capital, enterprises, the diplomatic corps and government offices were evacuated from it, the population fled in panic. Before Stalin came close to the prospect of moving from a comfortable Kremlin office to an underground bunker in the vicinity of Kuibyshev.

Under these conditions, the command of the Leningrad Front received on October 23 specific instructions from the Supreme Commander: in three days, by all means, break through the blockade and withdraw troops, even if for this it is necessary to surrender Leningrad:

"If you don't break through the front within the next few days and don't firmly restore ties with the 54th Army, which connects you with the rear of the country, all the vapti troops will be taken prisoner. The restoration of this connection is necessary not only in order to supply the troops of the Leningrad Front, but especially in order to give the troops of the Leningrad Front an outlet to the east in order to avoid capture, if necessity forces the surrender of Leningrad ...

Either you will break through the front in these three days and give your troops the opportunity to withdraw to the east if it is impossible to hold Leningrad, or you will all be taken prisoner. Concentrate eight or ten divisions and break through to the east.

This is also necessary in case Leningrad is retained and in the event of Leningrad's trouble. For us, the army is more important. We demand decisive action from you."

Vasilevsky on the same day explained to Khozin even more frankly: "I'm worth a penny to consider that in this case we are talking not so much about saving Leningrad, but about saving and withdrawing the armies of the Leningrad Front."

Thus, Stalin made the "Kutuz decision" - to save the army. The mining of Leningrad was quite in the spirit of the war declared Patriotic War - the French in 1812 also set fire to Moscow.

General Fedyuninsky did not cope with the task, although he threw "to the east" - to the Tosnensky line and the Nevsky "piglet" - 8 rifle divisions and 4 brigades. General Khozin took up the matter with zeal. On October 30, the command of the 8th Army, headed by General Shevaldin, was ordered to redeploy to Ozerki, receive the troops of the Neva Operational Group and continue crossing the Neva. Together with them, the 281st, 191st, 80th (former 1st DNO) and 85th (former 2nd DNO) rifle divisions departed.

On the Oranienbaum bridgehead, the Primorsky Operational Group was formed under the command of Major General A.N. Astana, which included the 48th Kalinin Rifle Division (on the front from Porozhki to the Gulf of Finland, it alone replaced six divisions, that is, here the Soviet troops for the first time organized real, and not active-fictitious defense), 2nd and 5th I brigade and the 3rd Marine Regiment, the 519th howitzer artillery regiment and the 287th tank battalion.

Shevaldin and Okorokov were summoned to Smolny on November 2. The new commander of the front, Lieutenant General Mikhail Semenovich Khozin, told them: "We will break through the blockade of Leningrad, and where the Hitlerite command least expects this, from the bridgehead on the banks of the Neva."

Hearing this, Commander-8, not imbued with the beauty of the authorities' plan, proposed his plan, based on the elementary rules of military affairs: in the old place, near Nevsky Dubrovka, conduct demonstrative actions, dull the enemy's vigilance, concentrate forces in another area within a week and suddenly cross the river in a new direction. However, Khozin rather abruptly interrupted General Shevaldin's speech: "There can be no question of any delay, or any extension of the training period. Delay will give the fascist command the opportunity to withdraw part of the troops from near Leningrad to strengthen the Tikhvin group.

Did Mikhail Semenovich really think that a strike from the only bridgehead, around which battles have been raging for a month and a half, the approaches to which are seen through and through by the enemy, is the place where the Germans "least wait"? But the front commander knew little concrete about the enemy. And he simply did not have military thoughts. Yes, and how can they come from a person who drank a bottle of vodka every day, sincerely considering this

"normal occurrence". As a result, we decided to start the operation the very next day.

In the "unexpected place" by that time six rifle

100

divisions (86, 115, 265, 168th, 177th and 20th NKVD divisions). On the western bank of the Neva, the 10th Rifle Division, the 11th Rifle Division, the 123rd Red Banner Heavy Tank Brigade and the 4th Naval Brigade lined up. One of the generals of the memoirists complains that in the tank brigade of Major General V.I. Baranov "there were only 50-60 obsolete BT-7s," but he is simply lying. According to the archives of the Ministry of Defense, the brigade was called "heavy tank" and was almost 100% equipped with KV-1 vehicles. True, there were still no tanks on the bridgehead: the Germans quickly burned the seven "batushki" transferred with incredible difficulties. There were not enough transfer funds.

There were many guns, but the shells were spent according to the established daily norms, like bread rations. All divisional, army and front artillery, and all artillery commanders were on the right bank, all commanders of rifle formations were on the left. Communication between the army headquarters, artillery, rear and "piglet" was carried out through a single telephone cable laid along the bottom of the Neva to the command post of one of the divisions. Therefore, 15 minutes of firing into the white light were allotted for the artillery preparation of the offensive.

To the right of the bridgehead, the Germans created a stronghold in the village of Arbuzovo, to the left - in the buildings of the 1st Gorodok and in the impenetrable reinforced concrete blocks of the 8th hydroelectric power station (in September it was handed over to the Germans almost without a fight, now it has turned into a fortress, which Soviet troops stormed for two years), there was an anti-tank ditch in front, of course, once a former one, and the nearest target was the Figurnaya grove.

At noon on November 3, fresh regiments of the 168th division, Major General A.L., went on the offensive. Bondarenko together with units of the 86th and 177th divisions. It was not possible to suppress enemy artillery firing points, as soon as the Soviet infantry went on the attack, the Germans met it with dense machine-gun and mortar fire from the front and flanks. The regiments were melting before our eyes, the attack bogged down. Recalls General S.N. Borshchev, who was then head of the operational department:

"It was very hard on my heart. After all, we lost the best people, hardened in battles, but we did not complete the task. When one of the staff workers began to complain about the difficulties of an offensive from an open "patch", where neither maneuver nor a flank strike could be used, the divisional commander, looking at him intently, said in an even, calm voice: "Comrade Stalin's Nevsky patch is marked on the map . Do you think people at Headquarters understand less than you?"

Talking among ourselves, we tried to find mistakes and omissions of the regiment commanders, criticized ourselves for poor exactingness, but deep down we understood that none of us was guilty of anything, just as those commanders of units and formations who tried to break through here are not guilty. enemy defense to us".

The damned fascists were blamed for their own stupidity.

Bondarenko, a competent general, understood perfectly well that with the system of leadership that had developed in the Red Army, one should not be smarter than the authorities. No one needs his ability to maneuver and cover the flanks, you just need to unquestioningly obey idiotic orders and show "good demands."

101

The commander of the army also quickly got his bearings: on the morning of November 4, he called the division commander, ordering him to personally lead the regiments into the attack. Bondarenko, "reinforced" by four tanks thrown across the river at night, led. All day he tried to break through to the Roshe "Figured" and even broke into the anti-tank ditch. The battle of the division was controlled by nachooper Borshchev:

"About ten minutes later, the commander of the army called. Reporting to him the situation, I said that the attack had bogged down. The lieutenant general interrupted me:

I order you to personally punish the commander of the 402nd regiment, the commander of the battalion advancing in the first echelon, and the tankers who did not complete their combat mission!

Comrade, lieutenant general," I replied, "there is no one to punish. The commander of the third battalion, senior lieutenant Vorobyov, died a heroic death, dragging the fighters into the attack, the tanks were hit and burning, the tankers, apparently, died. And the regiment commander Yermakov is a hero...

To all my insistent demands to suppress the firing points in the "Figured" roche and repeat the artillery attack on the 8th hydroelectric power station, the head of artillery of the army, Colonel S.A. Krasnopevtsev replied that the entire supply of shells sent to us to ensure today's offensive was used up, and he was unable to help us in any way. Convinced that there was nothing more to wait for artillery cover, Bondarenko, fearing to lose all the people, ordered to stop the attacks, leave the anti-tank ditch and retreat to their previous positions.

A day later, the commander of the 168th division again personally led the fighters into the attack. And the commander of the 86th division, Colonel A.M. Andreev also personally ...

The 177th Infantry Division of Colonel G.I. fought nearby. Vekhina (already killed once in the Luga pocket and re-formed at the direction of Moscow from the remnants of the 10th Infantry Brigade and personnel of the air defense regiments). In the same way, for several days, she unsuccessfully attacked the German fortifications in the forehead and also suffered huge losses. Here are the numbers. On November 5, the "piglet" veteran formations consisted of: the 115th rifle division - 82 active bayonets (!); 86th division - 61 bayonets; 265th division - 60 bayonets! The 177th Rifle Division spent 20 days on the bridgehead. During this time, they managed to equip one dugout and lose almost the entire personnel.

On the Tikhvin direction, the 4th Army of General Vsevolod Fedorovich Yakovlev

(1895-1974), having received reinforcements, on November 1 launched a counterattack with the forces of three infantry and one tank divisions in the general direction of Budogoshch - Gruzino with the task of restoring defenses at the turn of the Volkhov River. She was unable to complete this task. The reinforcement divisions that arrived from Leningrad had neither artillery nor transport and entered the battle only with small arms. The troops acted at different times and inconsistently.

The enemy, having repelled all the attacks, after which the 44th Rifle Division had

102

700, and in the 191st - about a thousand fighters, on November 5 resumed the offensive. On the evening of November 8, the 12th Panzer Division of General Harpe and the 18th Motorized General of Major Gerlein, sweeping away Soviet units on their way, entered Tikhvin, which was not defended by anyone. The Germans managed to cut the communications of the Fedyuninsky army and the only railway line, along which cargoes went to Lake Ladoga to supply Leningrad. Soviet losses were estimated at 20,000 Red Army soldiers taken prisoner, 179 captured guns, and nearly 100 tanks destroyed.

Five days later, a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the German army groups took place in Orsha. The decision adopted at it said: "The question of providing food for large cities is insoluble. There is no doubt that especially Leningrad should be destroyed by famine, because it is impossible to feed this city.

Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, concerned about the morale of the German soldiers, who were supposed to suppress attempts by the civilian population to leave the doomed "center of Bolshevism" with machine guns, suggested withdrawing the troops altogether, and blocking all exits from the city with wipig minefields:

"If the Red troops in the region of Leningrad and Kronstadt lay down their arms and are taken prisoner, then the commander-in-chief sees no reason to continue the blockade of the city.

Nevsky Piglet during the first battles (September - early November 1941)

Troops must be redeployed to their places of permanent deployment. And in this case, most of the population will die, but at least not for our eyes."

The ease with which it was possible to achieve the goal gave rise to such extraordinary pleasantness in the minds of the German command that it became quite seriously interested in the headquarters of the 39th motorized corps in the possibility of making a 400-kilometer march to Vologda, without exchanging for all sorts of trifles. General Halder wrote in his diary: "The enemy reacts extremely weakly to our attack on Tikhvin. He probably doesn't have any more reserves."

The first to worry and "react" was the commander of the 7th Separate Army, Lieutenant General Kirill Afanasyevich Meretskov (1897-1968), who received information that the Germans were coming to his rear. Connections with V.F. Yakovlev was not there, the Headquarters did not have specific information. Therefore, on November 5, Meretskov sent his chief of staff to the 4th Army combat area and quickly found out that the situation near Tikhvin was rather gloomy.

The defeated headquarters of General Yakovlev, without controlling anything, retreated to the east in separate groups that had no connection with each other. Right flank formations of the 4th Army (285th, 310th, 311th, 292nd Rifle Divisions, two battalions of the 281st Division, 6th Marine, 16th Tank Brigade, 883rd Corps Artillery Regiment), exposing 60 kilometers of front, retreated to the Volkhov and Kobona area under the leadership of the chief

103

Army Headquarters Major General 11. I. Lyapin.

This Lyapin did not rack his brains over how to close the 60-km gap that had formed or cling to an advantageous line, but was carried away by the organization of the withdrawal and the evacuation of the rear. He drove the echelons with material supplies so far that later they had to be searched for with the help of front-line aviation, while the soldiers on the front line were without ammunition and food. The remnants of the 44th and 191st Rifle Divisions retreated north along the road to Lodeinoye Pole. The remaining formations of the army were scattered east and south of Tikhvin.

On November 7, General Meretskov reported to Moscow on the current situation and received an order: urgently go to the 4th Army, take temporary command of it, while acting as commander-7, and solve the standard task - "stop and defeat". From the 7th Army, the 46th Tank Brigade, a rifle regiment, four mortar and two engineer battalions were urgently sent to the Tikhvin area. On the evening of November 8, Meretskov, with a group of officers, arrived in Sarozha, 22 kilometers north of Tikhvin, where he met his new subordinates who continued to retreat:

"Having learned about our arrival, officers began to gather in the dining room where we arrived. The mood of our interlocutors was depressed. Almost all of them retreated through Tikhvin. But no one could really explain how the city was surrendered. According to them, he was captured suddenly. Units and subunits that lost control even on the outskirts of Tikhvin passed the city without stopping in it.

Having captured the city, the enemy, also without stopping, launched an offensive to the north - to the Svir River and to the east - along the highway and the railway to Vologda. The main forces of the retreating troops also grouped along these axes. Here are the few information that we managed to find out in the evening in the dining room ...

One of the commanders offered to speak with the fighters to find out their mood. So they did. The fighters spoke out reluctantly, but rather frankly complained that frosts had come, and they were still in summer uniforms, that they had run out of ammunition and had nothing to shoot with, that German aviation was doing what it wanted, and our planes were not visible, that German tanks were coming and going, but they don't have

even a grenade, but our guns are silent.

In short, the 4th Army as a single fighting body no longer existed.

On the same day, Zhdanov and Khozin had an extremely unpleasant conversation with Comrade Stalin:

"You have been given a period of several days. If you do not break through to the east within a few days, you will ruin the Leningrad front and the population of Leningrad ... You have to choose between captivity, on the one hand, and sacrificing several divisions and making your way to the east in order to save your front and Leningrad. .. I repeat, there is little time left. Soon you will be left without bread.

Try to isolate the pears of hunters from different divisions, the most daring

104

people, make up one or two consolidated regiments and explain to all of them the significance of the feat that is required of them in order to clear the way. It is possible that the consolidated regiments of brave people will pull the rest of the infantry along with them. All. If you do not agree or have any doubts, tell me directly.

Brilliant! How is it that we ourselves "didn't stomp" (Khozin's expression)! All you need is two regiments of heroes. The leaders of the defense of Leningrad were well aware that captivity did not shine for them, even if they really wanted to. Only a bullet in the back of the head - from the vigilant guardians of the bodies.

Stalin also advised to transport heavy HF across the Neva in disassembled form, unfortunately without explaining who and how would assemble them in hell on the left bank. And since the artillery still shoots blindly, and there is neither time, nor skill, nor desire to conduct reconnaissance, it is best to work in areas - choose one square kilometer and concentrate on it the fire of all available barrels and rocket launchers.

Of course, Zhdanov immediately, without leaving the phone, assured the Great Leader of the Peoples: "The Military Council of the Front not only has no doubts, but completely agrees with you and never for a minute before any measures

let's stop."

To accomplish the feat, literally within a day, three regiments of 2750 people were formed from the communists, at the head of each they put a division commander and "sacrificing" them without the slightest hesitation. 600 guns and 120-mm mortars were piled up against a kilometer-long breakthrough zone.

On the morning of November 10, the First Shock Communist Regiment of Lieutenant Colonel N.A. crossed over to the "piglet". Vasiliev. An hour later, the regiment went into battle, found itself under a hurricane of enemy fire, and by the evening there were no more

over 500 fighters. On November 11, the Second Shock Regiment arrived and immediately rushed to the offensive with the support of the depleted 168th and 177th rifle divisions. And again they ran into an anti-tank ditch of "domestic production". A day later, the Third Regiment and 8 BT tanks were thrown onto the bridgehead, ordering all divisions and headquarters to attack simultaneously in the direction of the Sinyavin Heights. After these assaults, out of the three commanders of the shock regiments, only the commander of the Third Communist Major General P.A. remained alive. Zaitsev, and the surviving "brave

people" were poured into Bondarenko's division*. For five days of fighting, Soviet losses amounted to more than 5 thousand people.

* November 15 General L.A. Bondarenko was recalled from the Nevsky "piglet" and appointed commander of the 8th Army instead of Shevaldin. However, for those who remained on the bridgehead, this did not change anything. Although seven divisions and two rifle brigades had already gathered on the left bank of the Neva, it was possible to transport heavy tanks (the river finally stood up, by November 18 the thickness of the ice reached 8-10 cm), the task of breaking through the enemy's defenses or at least mastering the Figurnaya grove remained unfulfilled .

S.N. Borshchev recalled: "A long month will pass, during which we, exhausted by hunger and battles, in dire need of shells and ammunition, will go every day to storm enemy fortifications until we receive the long-awaited, stunningly joyful news of the defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow.

105

At the end of November, the 1st Infantry Division replaced the German paratroopers on the Neva.

In order to give at least some sense today to the massacre on the "patch", in which up to 1,000 Soviet soldiers died daily, Russian "historians in uniform" talk at length about some "significant forces of the Nazis" that they managed to forge, and about the "damage" inflicted on 12 -and German divisions. By listing these enemy units, none of them deliberately makes it difficult for themselves, since the division has always been one, it's just that the Germans regularly changed their units for rest and replenishment.

Optimist A.D. Okorokov also clarifies that in the battles "our military personnel grew and strengthened. All those who fought on the Neva, from privates to military leaders, gained invaluable combat experience. Well, this is how Yu.I. Smolensky: "In October we moved to Neva Dubrovka, crossed on boats and pontoons. Days and nights began on the Neva "patch", merging into one endless battle, as a result of which six active bayonets remained from the battalion. I was wounded in the head, my left eye was knocked out, and during the ice drift, on a boat that delivered food, I returned to the right bank. You could say lucky." And the entire 3rd battalion, and the entire 330th rifle regiment of the 86th division, with "grown up and strengthened military personnel," remained lying in the trenches plowed up by German artillery. Exactly in twenty days, the 177th division melted away, at the end of November only its headquarters, commanders and regimental commissars were removed from the bridgehead.

Yes, the experience is truly invaluable. Only no one needed him, as well as the knowledge of military leaders. Conclusions from these "experiments" are embarrassed to draw even today.

"Whoever passed death near Dubrovka is born a second time," that is the whole soldier's experience. And here is the soldier's opinion, which in Soviet times was not interested in any Military Publishing House (and today they are not interested if it does not coincide with the general's): "If the Germans filled our headquarters with spies, and the troops with saboteurs, if there was mass betrayal and the enemies would develop a detailed plan for the collapse of our army, they would not have achieved the effect that was the result of the idiocy, stupidity, irresponsibility of the authorities and the helpless humility of the soldiers ...

The meanness of the Bolshevik system was especially clearly manifested in the war. Just as the most hard-working, honest, intelligent, active and intelligent people were arrested and executed in peacetime, the same thing happened at the front, but in an even more open, disgusting form ... The most honest people who felt their responsibility to society died. There was a stupid, senseless killing of our soldiers.

To the south, "experiments" continued on six divisions of the 55th Army (43rd, 85th, 90th, 70th, 125th, 268th), who, with the support of the 123rd KV tank brigade and two tank battalions, tried to capture Ust-Tosno and the cursed moat. An identical picture was observed here: heroism without shells, exactingness instead of reconnaissance, a tribunal instead of competent preparation and organization of interaction.

106

Along the Kirov railway, the 85th rifle division of Major General Lyubovtsev was advancing on Ust-Tosno. Recalls the former commander of the 103rd Infantry Regiment SM. Bardin:

"The offensive, when viewed from the side, was impressive and, perhaps, intimidating. Shells were flying through our heads with a howl and whistle and there, beyond the river. Tosnoy, in the camp of the enemy, they roared with a roar, lifting up pieces of frozen earth mixed with snow. The leading edge of the Germans was enveloped in a continuous cloud of thick smoke. All this was clearly visible to us, it was even more exciting. We quickened our pace. In those moments, none of us thought of anything but the upcoming battle. One thing was on my mind: win it! With each meter passed, the excitement increased, because the enemy was silent. So, he was stunned, pressed to the ground by artillery fire. Surely there were direct hits in the location of the Nazis.

I looked at my fighters with hope. Almost three thousand armed people, I believed, could crush everything in their path, go to the cherished opposite bank of the river and invade the enemy's location. And some people have already crossed the line of ice and started throwing grenades. "He spoke", sitting behind a hillock on the shore, and one of our machine guns. But at that very time the artillery preparation ended and it became quiet. The silence was frightening. It seemed

she bared us.

I turned around, looked at the ranks of the attackers and was horrified: the bulk

the fighters were still in the middle of the road. And at this time, enemy large-caliber shells flew into the ranks of the advancing. The Nazis, as it turned out later, opened massive artillery fire from the right flank. They fired fiercely, simultaneously from several batteries. It turned out disastrous for us that no one interfered with them: neither our artillery, nor aviation. The enemy artillery attack happened so unexpectedly that we were at a loss. In an instant, the harmony of movement was broken.

Commanders and soldiers who had already believed in their victory began to die under enemy fire.

Almost all nine companies were covered with enemy shells. The area was covered in smoke. There was a deafening roar above the bolt. The cries of commanders and the cries of the wounded were barely audible.

I looked in a daze at the rows of mouths being shot, at the bodies of the dead flying up together with the ground, at the wounded writhing in pain. Chills seized me. The attack halted in an instant. The regiment began to melt before our eyes ... The idea came to contact the artillery regiment and ask them to suppress the enemy's batteries. But they answered me that the shells had not yet been delivered, and those that were used up during artillery preparation.

But they gained combat experience, grew and strengthened the cadres! Here is what Colonel V.K. Zinoviev:

"Having learned about the tragic offensive in the neighboring division, in a conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Senkevich, I disapproved [®] of the preparation and

107

carrying out such inefficient operations. Yan Petrovich looked at me with narrowed eyes and did not answer. Shortly after my conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Senkevich, General Bogaichuk called me in. Having greeted each other, he asked in no uncertain terms: "Are you saying, Comrade Zinoviev, that the operations to use shock troops are being planned and carried out incorrectly?"

I realized that my opinion on this issue was reported to the general by the chief of staff. Buluchi, confident that he was right, replied: "Very wrong, comrade general. That would be to collect all the shock parts in one fist! And Krasny Bor would not have resisted "...

The general looked into my eyes with interest, and then said: "Look, Comrade Zinoviev, at my map. Maybe this is how we should use our forces? Do you find such a fist on my map?"

I was shocked. My decision was reflected on the General's card...

"That's exactly what I think," he murmured. "So, comrade, Zinoviev! We graduated from the same academy. Here are our solutions. But our

no one asks for your opinion. And this is dictated by a very difficult situation. Everyone is trying to get rid of the blockade and hunger as soon as possible. Few people think about academic decisions. This, of course, is a tragedy. But in this tragedy there is also a positive. We do not give the fascists peace. We have not retreated a single step, but, on the contrary, we are trying to win them back ... "

After this conversation with the general, I began to treat him with even greater respect. He began to ask sometimes, looking at me: "How would you decide at the academy?".

But to be precise, these are the Germans - the 122nd and 121st Infantry Divisions, which were the defending side, did not retreat a single step.

The fighting went on around the clock. In the 55th Army, "dared men for exploits" were also selected. Every night, the so-called blocking groups of 10-12 people went to the front line. Armed with grenades and machine guns, they were called upon to destroy enemy pillboxes that Soviet artillery could not neutralize. Of the blockers, few survived. And in the morning, infantry with rifles at the ready attacked the German machine guns again.

The tanks that arrived from the Kirov Plant got stuck in the quagmire, not reaching the front line, but if they did, they could not overcome the anti-tank ditch. They were knocked out, after which the evacuation of armored vehicles to the rear became a new concern, otherwise the enemy turned these tanks into their firing points.

From the report of the 70th Infantry Division of November 5:

"Two block groups have been formed, with three tanks with armored sleds, ten submachine gunners, five sappers. The 252nd and 329th regiments with block groups tried to destroy the bunker on the southern outskirts of Ust-Tosno. The tanks were hit by fire up to the wire. The infantry lay down under artillery and mortar fire in front of the barbed wire.

108

By November 18, the 70th division had 42 active bayonets in the 252nd regiment, 70 in the 329th, and 130 bayonets in the 8th. Total - 242 bayonets, that is, a company instead of a regiment!

From the report of the Chief of Staff of the 90th Rifle Division, Colonel Tsukanov:

"The experience of previous battles has shown that the method of using our forces at the present time has not given the desired results, therefore, it must be revised. Parts of the division suffered heavy losses without completing their assigned tasks. The opposing enemy was not taken into account, the organization of defense was not taken into account, fire weapons were not specified. Hence the blind attack. They tried to compensate for the ambiguities in the situation by introducing large forces into battle, which was not justified by the situation and led to heavy losses and disruption in control.

Again D.V. Ivanov:

"On November 27, a new order was received from the army headquarters: "268th SD to capture the anti-tank ditch, make passages for tanks, take possession of the sheds at the 12.7 mark." The attack, designed for surprise, did not bring success: our regiments were too small, the fascist machine-gun fire was too well organized. Ours approached the moat at 50-100 m, but there were 10-15 people left in the rifle platoons, and there was no one to attack."

From the report of the 268th Infantry Division:

"The 76-mm guns of the 1930 model could not destroy the enemy's firing points. During the attack, the OTs were alive and opened heavy fire on the attackers. The assigned three tanks could not overcome the anti-tank ditch.

If the "introduction of large forces into battle" can be called, although ineffective, but still a "method of using" forces, then how can one explain the absence on the side of the Soviet troops of at least somehow equipped positions with shelters for personnel: absolute indifference to the lives of soldiers ? military illiteracy? continuous "offensive impulse"?

The Germans, in any territory they occupied, created an extensive network of deep trenches, machine-gun nests, dugouts with two or three rolls, with heating and furniture, kneaded clay and laid it all out with bricks, used railway rails and even captured rubber to strengthen pillboxes. Some of their buildings have survived to this day.

Meanwhile, the Red Army men sat in small cells under fire from all types of weapons, not being able to relieve themselves or receive rations during daylight hours. For comfort, the Red Army men especially hated the Fritz, but never missed the chance to "trophy". Writer Daniil Granin said: "When we first took German dugouts, we found hot coffee there. I remember how we were outraged: a thermos of hot coffee and a roll of toilet paper! We had no idea what toilet paper was - we couldn't even wipe ourselves with newspapers, because newspapers were needed for rolling cigarettes. From the first day of the war we experienced

109

humiliation from their poverty."

I will add on my own: what is toilet paper, the Soviet Army never found out until the last day of its existence.

Former commander of a separate ski battalion A.F. Zabara was surprised at the thoroughness of the Fritz: "Jumping into the ditch, I saw the enemy's firing point located right in front of our tunnel I draw your attention to how the firing point is arranged. It is lined with small sandbags. The bags, like bricks, stacked one on top of the other, form not only a parapet, but also an embrasure in the parapet, through which the fascist machine gunner fired at

our positions, while he remained practically invisible. The bags are sprinkled with snow on top, the firing point merges with the terrain, with a snowy field. I have never seen anything like this... They know how, bastards, to fight!"

The Soviet "fathers-commanders" did not even attempt to create at least something resembling a real defense. Here, for example, SM. Bardin takes positions at the 86th SD:

"We went to take over the defense area, which is actually located in a swamp. The dugouts turned out to be low, with a thin, unreliable ceiling. They saved people only from bullets. Even the smallest mine pierced through them. This section was constantly fired upon by the enemy from mortars, heavy machine guns and machine guns. In such unreliable conditions, the units occupying the defense suffered losses all the time.

This description refers to December 1941. We add that 70% of the losses of the Soviet units were from enemy artillery fire. And after 60 years, the search engines immediately determine by eye whose positions were - the Red Army or the Wehrmacht.

Here is an entry in the army combat log:

"During the operation to clear the western coast, the headquarters of the units and rifle divisions showed their helplessness and poor control."

A change of commander followed, the 55th Army was taken over by Major General V.P. Sviridov. However, the tactics did not change: the front headquarters demanded the continuation of the offensive, and frontal infantry attacks on unsuppressed enemy firing points continued. The losses of the army in November amounted to more than 20 thousand people. There were 70-80 bayonets left in the regiments. Report of the 268th Infantry Division of December 1 reads:

"There are 138 people left in the division. The division cannot conduct combat operations.

"To develop success in the direction of the Mga station" did not work.

Until November 9, the 54th Army tried to take Sinyavino. It was not possible to advance even a meter, so General Fedyuninsky, who took command on October 26, does not mention a word about this operation and his participation in it in his memoirs. Tem

110

In time, the 21st Infantry Division of General Sponheimer reached the Volkhov Hydroelectric Power Station - "the enemy stretched out a bloody paw to this brainchild of the Soviet people, to this monument to the genius of Lenin." Parts of the 8th Panzer Division were also aiming here from Tikhvin. It was worth the Germans to overcome another 30 km from Volkhov to Novaya Ladoga, and the 54th Army found itself in a "boiler".

On November 12, the Headquarters assigned responsibility for the defense of Volkhov to Fedyuninsky, transferring to him the formations of the Lyapin task force. "Monument to a Genius", the Volkhov aluminum plant, bridges in the event of the abandonment of the city were subject to destruction.

General Meretskov and his officers gathered units of the 4th Army scattered across the forests and roads, put them together into organized detachments, searched for chiefs, established communications and supply of troops, and set specific tasks. To the north of Tikhvin, the remnants of the 44th and 191st rifle divisions were found, the commanders of which, having no guidance, could not decide what to do next:

"They were very happy to see the general in front of them and stopped the argument."

In the Vologda direction, there were only two rifle regiments with a total strength of 400 people, but already on November 11, trains with a full-blooded 65th rifle division of Colonel Pyotr Kirillovich Koshevoy (1904-1976) * arrived at the Bolshoy Dvor station from Transbaikalia. On the way were two separate tank battalions.

* PC. Koshevoy later became a general, commanded the 63rd, 71st and 36th rifle buildings. Twice received the stars of the Hero - in 1944 and 1945. Since 1968 - Marshal.

South of Tikhvin, from Mulev to Vorozhba, the 27th cavalry and 60th tank divisions were defending. Meretskov noted that the latter had only 70 "obsolete T-26 tanks with low cross-country ability." This is something new.

It is not surprising that most of our military leaders, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, make it clear that German equipment in the initial period of the war was both newer than Soviet, and better armored, and burned more reluctantly - this is a common thing. But I have never heard or read before that German and Czech tanks, with all their other advantages, could also boast of increased cross-country ability!

Even further south, in the Nebolchi area, "they held back the onslaught of the enemy's motorized division" of the 4th Guards and 92nd Rifle Divisions. All three groups acted independently and disunitedly. Nevertheless, constantly counterattacking with available forces and suitable reserves, General Meretskoye managed to stop the further advance of the enemy in the period from November 11 to 14. The Germans rolled back to Tikhvin and began to build defenses around the city: stone buildings were adapted for firing points, trenches were dug on the outskirts, and mine and wire barriers were installed. Two days later, Field Marshal Leeb suggested that the General Staff of the OKH leave Tikhvin altogether. However, General Halder demanded to keep the city at all costs. At the end of November, in order to free up mobile units, to Tikhvin, partly by air, partly

under its own power, the 61st Infantry Division was transferred.

At the same time, the Germans recognized the Volkhov direction as more promising, where they decided to additionally send units of the 254th Infantry Division. She, along with the 11th, 21st and 191st infantry divisions, was to be part of the Beckman group, which was tasked with capturing the village of Shum and the Voybokalo station on the Mga-Volkhov railway line. General Fedyuninsky, having at his disposal 13 divisions (3rd guards, 128, 294, 286, 198, 115, 80, Z11, 285, 292, 281, 310th rifle, 21st tank) and 4 brigades (1st mountain rifle, 6th naval, 16th and 122nd tank), managed to repel this attack of 4 German divisions.

Thus, the offensive of the German troops in the second half of November was stopped. German attempts to break through Tikhvin to the Svir River, as well as through the Volkhov and Voybokalo to Lake Ladoga failed. Their plan to unite with the Finns and completely blockade Leningrad remained unfulfilled. The Soviet troops, having lost more than 40,000 men killed and wounded, exhausted the enemy's strike force, stretching up to 350 km at the front with unsecured flanks. Such an operational position of the enemy troops favored the transition of the Soviet troops to a counteroffensive in order to throw back the shock formations of Army Group North to the starting line - beyond the Volkhov River, to ensure the uninterrupted operation of the section of the railway along which goods were delivered to Ladoga.

To top it off, the German troops, who expected to spend the winter quietly in Moscow and Astrakhan, "unexpectedly" fell upon the early and harsh Russian winter. The soldiers did not have warm uniforms, mass frostbite began, automobile and tank engines did not start, recoil fluid froze in the guns. All preparations for combat operations in winter conditions were reduced to painting helmets white and seconding divisional supplies to the "fatherland" to collect warm clothes from the population.

The Red Army should have gone on the counteroffensive as usual - urgently and without preparation. K.A. Meretskov writes in his memoirs: "The difficult situation in Leningrad and the insistent demands of the Headquarters to release Tikhvin as soon as possible forced a transition to decisive action. Therefore, we had to give the order to go over to the counteroffensive before we received materiel and reinforcements.

The idea of the operation was to deliver several blows in converging directions on Kirishi and Gruzina. The main blow was delivered from the Tikhvin region by the 4th Army with the task of connecting in the Kirishi region with the troops of the 54th Army and in the Gruzino region with the troops of the 52nd Army. The Novgorod army group, advancing on Selishche, interacted with the latter.

The armies went over to the offensive separately by separate regiments and divisions as they were ready, or rather, to varying degrees of unpreparedness. Therefore, until the end of November, these military operations took place at the headquarters of the enemy under the rubric local attacks.

So, on November 10 north of Novgorod, the Novgorod army group (305th, 180th rifle, 3rd tank, 25th cavalry divisions) launched a counterattack; November 12 north and south of Malaya Vishera - 52nd Army (288th, 259th, 111th, 267th rifle divisions). The offensive of the Novgorod group against the 250th Infantry Division bogged down immediately. The Spaniards, although at first they made the impression of a "gypsy camp" on the disciplined Germans, turned out to be brave warriors, showing "outstanding fighting qualities and readiness for self-sacrifice."

The troops of the 52nd Army of General Klykov, who were opposed by units of the 126th Infantry Division of General Lauks, only on November 18 managed to break through the enemy defenses with night attacks and only on November 20 captured Malaya Vishera. The Soviet army commander, organizing the offensive, had no idea about the creation of shock groups. His four divisions attacked in a "chain" on a 48-kilometer front. Malaya Vishera, well fortified by the Germans, was stormed head-on by two regiments of the 259th division. Until the end of November, the Klykovites managed to advance 10-15 km, then the enemy brought the 215th Infantry Division into battle.

On November 19, the 4th Army went on the offensive (4th Guards, 44th, 191st, 65th, 97th rifle, 27th cavalry, 60th tank divisions, 46th tank brigade, 120th separate tank battalion), seeking, with the support of 608 guns and mortars, to intercept the communications of the enemy grouping under the base of the Tikhvin ledge with flank strikes by their northern and southern operational groups under the base of the Tikhvin ledge, and to drive the enemy out of the city with frontal attacks by Koshevoy's fresh division.

The Germans offered stubborn resistance everywhere, and attacked themselves in a number of areas.

In the band of the 54th Army, Khozin and Zhdanov, who did not lose hope of pleasing the Leader with success, decided to conduct a separate "very interesting and capable of bringing a quick solution operation." The essence of the idea was to take advantage of the ice cover established on Ladoga and the forces of one rifle division with a ski regiment, without heavy weapons, to strike from the side of the lake towards the troops attacking from the Nevsky "patch".

Commander of the 80th Infantry Division, Colonel I.M. Frolov received a verbal order from the front commander and a day to prepare for the operation scheduled for November 23. A few hours before the start of the offensive, the divisional commander dared to express doubts about the successful outcome of the general's undertaking and was immediately removed from his post. The operation was postponed for a day, a new commander, Major Brygin, was sent from Leningrad.

The details of this "ice campaign" have not been preserved, it is only known for certain that it failed miserably, as Frolov predicted. Major Brygin was seriously wounded in battle and died in an ambulance on the way to Moscow. Colonel I.M. Fomin and Commissioner K.D. Ivanov was accused of treason and disruption of the operation to break the blockade, was tried and, with Stalin's personal approval, was shot.

By this time, on the front from Lake Ladoga to Lake Ilmen, 28 Soviet divisions and 6 brigades were operating against 14 Germans - about 300 thousand soldiers,

2120 guns and mortars, 200 tanks. The enemy forces were estimated at 130 thousand people, 1000 guns and mortars, about 200 tanks and assault guns.

The numerical superiority of the Red Army was balanced by a lack of ammunition, the need to act exclusively along the roads, the eternal "as soon as possible" and "at any cost", the inability of commanders to resolutely concentrate forces in the main direction, and also "our lack of a clear organizational structure of troops." Marshal P.K. described how it looked near Tikhvin after the war. Koshevoy:

"Several artillery shots were fired from our side. The shells exploded in the enemy trench. This, as they explained to me, was artillery preparation. Then three red rockets flew towards the enemy, and four or five tanks with landing troops entered at an average speed on the road indicated by them in a column with an interval of 25-30 m.

I confess that neither before nor after such an attack of tanks with a landing force, I have not seen, although I went through the whole war. As soon as the BTs were seen by the enemy, artillery fire was opened on them. A minute later, the lead tank caught fire. The landing infantry scattered across the field and lay down. The rest of the tanks stopped, reversed, and at top speed went back into the forest. The enemy pursued them with fire.

There was a noise in the forest. Someone scolded the tankers with choice words. They weren't in debt. As a result, tanks with troops in the same formation again appeared on the ill-fated road, but without artillery preparation for the attack: there were no shells for it. Everything repeated from the beginning. Two more tanks blazed; the landing force, having lost several people, scattered across the field. The rest of the cars turned back ...

My heart and mind protested against the method of attack that I had witnessed. This was not the way to attack and prepare the battle. Neither the preparation nor the assurance of success were thought through. The fighters and equipment were thrown to the enemy, they suffered unjustified losses and did not achieve the slightest positive result. No one really controlled the fight. It seemed that none of the commanders properly thought about the fact that a living, and not a dead, warrior wins.

As in the Malovishersky direction, formations of the 4th Army stubbornly went into frontal attacks on enemy strongholds, not trying to find weaknesses in the enemy's defenses or make a roundabout maneuver. For example, the northern and eastern operational groups stormed the Smychka and May 1 state farms for five days, respectively, until they decided to bypass them. In addition, having a threefold superiority over the enemy in artillery, the advancing side distributed it evenly along the entire front of the semicircle, managing to achieve an operational "density" of 3-4 barrels per kilometer. The fighting was still carried out blindly, with "unseeing eyes." The gunners, not receiving intelligence data, fired at random and only at the front line.

The head of the army artillery tried to involve aviation in the adjustment of fire - a technique known since the First World War, but received from

representative of the Air Force amazing answer: "For our pilots, this is a matter

114

unusual." The only reconnaissance squadron was armed with MBR-2 single-engine seaplanes with two machine guns and a cruising speed of 160 km/h.

Being easy prey for German fighters and anti-aircraft guns, they could not fly during the day and were used exclusively for night bombing. But in this capacity, judging by the reports of the political departments, they inflicted terrible damage on the enemy, laying the Germans in whole regiments. Here is how the newspaper "On Guard of the Motherland" described the actions of the 41st squadron in November 1941:

"The squadron crossed the front line at night and broke into the rear of the enemy, where the Germans felt safe. Enemy convoys went with burning headlights. The villages set on fire by the Germans burned brightly, illuminating the entire area far and wide. The detachments of enemy infantry marching along the roads were clearly visible from above.

Here our pilots cleared up, our gunners-radio operators had fun. Destroying tanks, vehicles, batteries with bombs, our planes switched to strafing flight and sprayed the rushing hordes of the enemy with machine-gun jets. Once the thunder was complete. The enemy fled in different directions, leaving thousands of corpses. And the squadron, having exhausted its ammunition, returned to its airfield for new cargo. This burden she also brought down on the heads of the enemy. In the morning, the entire personnel of the squadron rejoiced.

It is impossible to imagine that a raid on Lyuban is described here by four flying boats capable of lifting six 100-kg bombs into the air. It is a pity that the Red Army did not have such "formidable" equipment.

All four years of the war, Soviet ground forces cursed the German "frames" and "bones", which did not give rest either on the front line or in the rear. It is surprising that during all this time the red generals never ordered such machines from the Soviet aviation industry. When the army needed a front-line bomber, designer V.M. Petlyakov (1891-1942) "designed" it in a month, copying the drawings of the Me-110 long-range fighter bought in the Reich. The result was the widely known Pe-2. In the same "safe" there was documentation on the twin-fuselage Focke-Wulf-189, but it was only after the fall of Berlin that they got their hands on it. Before the end of the war, adjusting artillery fire from the air remained an unusual thing for Stalin's "falcons".

During the Tikhvin operation, it also became clear that in the rifle units, who completely relied on the "gods of war", who constantly complained about the lack of ammunition, the ammunition for company and battalion mortars remained unused. As our historians explain, it turns out that the battalion commanders underestimated the effectiveness of mortar fire (although there was an opposite opinion about German mortars), and most importantly, they did not know how to use them. I had to remove mortar companies from battalions, mortar batteries from regiments, reduce them to mortar battalions and mortar divisions

and use centrally, under the guidance of more trained comrades.

Soon, despite another directive from the Headquarters of November 24, ordering

115

to develop the emerging success and defeat by joint efforts "the entire enemy grouping east of the Volkhov River", the arrival of Marshal Kulik from Moscow to help Meretskov, the already unhurried advance of the Soviet troops completely stopped, averaging 5-8 km. Moreover, even on November 27, General Halder believed that the offensive of the Beckman group on Shum was developing quite successfully, and only on November 30 did an entry appear in the diary:

"Now it becomes more and more obvious that our attack on Shum was a mistake. The main blow of the Beckman group should be directed at Volkhovstroy. An appropriate order has been issued."

But it was too late. The front briefly froze six kilometers south, southeast of Volkhov and directly at the Voybokalo station, and on December 3, the 54th Army, having received heavy KV tanks from Leningrad, transported across the ice of Lake Ladoga, struck a counterramp on the left flank of the Beckman group. The troops of the strike force, which included the 311th, 285th, 80th rifle divisions, the 6th marine brigade and the 122nd tank brigade, were tasked with reaching the Kirishi area and cutting off the enemy's escape route. The Germans desperately resisted, relying on a system of platoon and company strongholds created in villages and towns, at heights and at crossroads.

On December 5, having regrouped, concentrating the main forces on its left flank and receiving replenishment with people and ammunition, Meretskov's army continued the offensive. The Soviet troops advanced very slowly. The turning point came on December 7, when the left-flank formations of the 4th Army broke through the enemy defenses west of Tikhvin and, having reached Sitomla, created a threat to intercept the only communication of his Tikhvin group. It coincided with the transition of the Red Army to the counteroffensive near Moscow. The 191st and 65th rifle divisions came close to Tikhvin, firing positions were taken by 200 guns and two divisions of guards mortars. Halder noted:

"The enemy is making massive artillery raids on the city. Our troops are physically overworked. This condition is aggravated by frosts reaching 30-35 degrees. Of our five tanks, only one can fire. In the 8th Panzer Division there were 28 officers, 146 non-commissioned officers, 750 soldiers.

On December 8, the German command decided to evacuate Tikhvin and withdraw its troops to a distance "from which it is possible to influence artillery fire on the city." On December 9, after a brutal night assault, Soviet troops entered Tikhvin. The victory was immediately announced by the Soviet Information Bureau:

"In the battles for Tikhvin, 12 tank, 18 motorized and 61 infantry

enemy divisions. The Germans left over 7,000 corpses on the battlefield. The remnants of these divisions, dressed in peasant clothes and abandoned their weapons, fled in the forests in the direction of Budogoshch. Large trophies have been captured, which are counted.

Interestingly, from the same message, Stalin's "brothers and sisters" first learned that Tikhvin had been captured by the Germans "ten days ago." By the way, the 12th

116

tank, and the 18th motorized division, and the rest of the formations of the Schmidt corps (and General Arnim, who replaced him) had already been "defeated" once in the message of the Soviet Information Bureau dated August 22, along with the 11th and 30th SS divisions that did not yet exist in 1941. And yet, this time they got it badly: in the Tikhvin adventure, the 18th motorized division lost almost 9,000 people, 741 people went to Volkhov. We add that from the 65th Infantry Division Koshevoy is also not enough

what's left.

On December 35, with the introduction of two fresh divisions into battle (the 115th from Leningrad and the 198th from the Karelian Isthmus), the offensive of the 54th Army began to develop more successfully. Its troops, advancing 20 km, reached the Olomna area, covering the left flank of the enemy's Volkhov grouping. By that time, units of the 4th Army had covered its right flank. Divisions of the 52nd Army stormed Bolshaya Vishera.

On December 16, Hitler approved the proposal of the command of Army Group North on the withdrawal of German troops across the Volkhov River, which was supposed to be completed by December 22. The Germans "scattered" systematically, holding rear communications in their hands, leaving strong rearguards in strongholds, which the Russian infantry stormed for a long time and bloody, mining roads and blowing up bridges (which the Soviet units did not blow up during their retreat). As near Moscow, the enemy, even "in a peasant dress" and "abandoned weapons", was nowhere to be surrounded or cut off.

In essence, there was a slow push of the German units beyond the Volkhov. This is recognized by General Fedyuninsky, who names the main drawback:

"Our inability to carry out an energetic and daring maneuver to bypass and envelop enemy settlements. Therefore, in a number of cases, the struggle for these points dragged on.

The 291st Infantry Division of General Herzog was transferred from the Oranienbaum region to reinforce the 1st Army Corps. The pace of the Soviet offensive slowed down significantly. General Halder, who closely followed the events in the northwestern direction, noted daily:

"The departure from Tikhvin is being carried out in perfect order. The mat part was taken out entirely. Managed to organize the supply of fuel. There are no Russian counteractions... On the front of Army Group North, local battles are taking place, which do not interfere with the calm and systematic withdrawal of our units on the Volkhov sector of the front.

On December 17, the Headquarters formed the Volkhov Front under the command of General of the Army K.A. Meretskov. It included the 4th and 52nd armies, as well as the newly formed 59th and reserve 26th, soon renamed the 2nd shock.

The 52nd Army and the 4th (which was headed by Major General P.A. Ivanov) were assigned to pursue the retreating enemy. 59th Army Major General I.V. Galanin and the 2nd shock lieutenant general of the NKVD troops G.G. Sokolova

117

advanced to the Volkhov from the areas of formation. The right flank of the new front ran north of Kirishi, the left flanked into Lake Ilmen. No matter how Meretskov insisted on the transfer of the Fedyuninsky troops operating side by side with him, at the request of Khozin and Zhdanov, the 54th Army remained part of the Leningrad Front.

The commanders of the two fronts, as Soviet sources claimed for a long time, were tasked with defeating the enemy grouping that had reached Lake Ladoga in the MGGI area and lifting the blockade from Leningrad. But in fact, in the euphoria of the Moscow victory, Stalin ordered to encircle, "capture, and in case of refusal to surrender, exterminate the entire North Army Group at once.

The main role in "captivity and extermination was to be played by the Volkhov Front. His troops were ordered to clear the entire territory east of the Volkhov from the enemy, cross the river on the move and defeat the German divisions defending on the western bank. Then, during the offensive in the north-western direction, it was necessary to surround and destroy the enemy operating near Leningrad. The main blow was delivered in the center, in the direction of Gruzino - Siverskaya - Volosovo - Luga, bypassing Leningrad from the south.

The 59th Army (366th, 372nd, 374th, 376th, 378th and 382nd Rifle, 78th and 87th Cavalry Divisions, two tank and six ski battalions) and the 2nd Shock Army were assigned to this task. (327th Rifle Division, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 53rd, 57th, 58th, 59th Rifle Brigades, two tank and six ski battalions). The right of the flank 4th Army (4th

Guards, 191,44,65,377,92, 310th Rifle, 27th and 80th Cavalry, 60th Tank Division, 46th Tank Brigade, three separate tank battalion) was to advance in the general direction towards Kirishi - Tosno and, in cooperation with the 54th

Army of the Leningrad Front, encircle and destroy the enemy, who had advanced north of Mga to Lake Ladoga.

For General Fedyuninsky, this order set a completely new task. All autumn, his army was advancing in a westerly direction, trying to connect with the units that fought on the Nevsky "patch". Now the troops of the 54th Army should have shifted their efforts in a southeast direction, to the Tosno-Lyubani region, leaving the defenders of the left-bank bridgehead left to their own devices (the remnants of the Soviet formations were withdrawn to the right bank of the Neva, they were replaced by the 10th Infantry Division).

At the same time, the commander of the 52nd Army, with units of the Novgorod Operational Group passing under his control, was ordered to defeat the Novgorod grouping of the enemy and liberate Novgorod. At the second stage, it was supposed to bring into action one more combined arms army and 18-20 ski battalions.

The right-flank 11th Army of the North-Western Front was entrusted with the task of striking in the direction of Staraya Russa and cutting off the Germans' escape routes from Pongorol and Luga.

The Primorsky Group of the Leningrad Front was to go into

118

an offensive in a south-western direction with the release of airborne assault forces and ski detachments in order not to allow enemy units that did not want to be captured to prap across Narva.

Thus, the plan was based on the idea of developing the counteroffensive of the troops of the Volkhov Front, the Leningrad and North-Western Fronts into a powerful strategic operation with the participation of more than 80 settlement divisions, during which it was planned to bring new forces into combat operations and completely defeat all the troops of Field Marshal Leeb.

German intelligence was closely monitoring the situation. Exactly ten days after the signing of the Stavka directive, the radio interception service recorded the appearance of a large headquarters in the Volkhov sector, "which, apparently, should take over the overall leadership of the enemy offensive." Interestingly, for those Soviet commanders who had an idea about radio equipment, a sure sign of an upcoming enemy attack was a sudden radio silence; for the Germans, it was the increasing activity of "secret" negotiations about "cucumbers", "boxes" and "pencils".

On December 21, the 4th Army liberated Budogoshch. The next day, its advanced units reached Volkhov. To the south, without encountering resistance, the full-blooded 372nd Infantry Division of the arriving 59th Army reached the river, where it was exterminated within two days by its own division commander, you can't say otherwise.

Nachfin of the 372nd regiment N.F. Kazantsev recalls how experienced commanders, having carried out reconnaissance, suggested, without delay, bypassing the enemy through a poorly guarded area in a night raid and defeating him in the morning with blows to the front and from the rear. But the division was not commanded by them, but "who went through the school of the civil war, who had the practice of leading regiments and formations" (this is according to the general's memoirs), before the army he worked as a collective farm foreman (soldier's memoirs) Colonel N.P. Korkin. Here is what Kazantsev says:

"The division commander did not agree and ordered to dig in until the morning. Then he gave the order to advance at 6 12 noon 8 forehead without artillery preparation, and our division on the Volkhov River
put

by 50%. After that, the division withdrew to its lines ... In this battle, our Siberian division suffered a complete defeat. Remained killed on the ice of Volkhov about 4 thousand combat comrades

groves and we were not able to bury them. Two thousand wounded were sent to hospitals. The commanders, political workers and soldiers devoted to the Motherland were wonderful.

December 20, 1941 received an order to withdraw our division to the rear to the formation. In essence, we did not fight, but shamefully retreated to the rear. At 12 o'clock at night a new division arrived, occupied our lines, and we withdrew 8 forest, 3 km from the front line. Here the

division commander, Major Korkin, made another mistake, ordering not to move until 0000 in the morning. Despite the protests of the commanders of the regiment, the divisional commander categorically forbade the withdrawal from the front line until the morning, saying that "the Siberian division cannot shamefully retreat, stealthily, at night. Our soldiers are steadfast, courageous, not cowards, laughing (!!!), will go with the front line openly, marching, only during the day. December 31, 1941 the division commander called all the commanders

regiments

and ordered them to go in columns along the highway to the Smooth, where replenishment would be received. At 10 o'clock in the morning our division moved. Divisional Commander, Headquarters,

119

regimental commanders and commissars, on horseback, led the division on a marching march from the front line.

The regiments marched in a common column in broad daylight. The Nemps discovered this and sent 3 bombers and 2 fighters to bombard us. A column All

moved along the highway, and not a single officer gave a command to escape, although there was a forest on both sides. Apparently, the planes ran out of ammunition, they were completely insolent, low

descended and began to "press" us with their skis. "Save yourself!" - finally shouted some officer from the anti-aircraft gunners who were standing in the forest. First separate groups, and then all gushed

in the forest".

Korkin was removed from his post, but only in order to give him another division two months later. It is understandable, in the eyes of the higher authorities, it was always not the commander who senselessly lost people, but the one who dared to have his own judgment and discuss the orders of his superiors.

On December 22-26, German troops took up defensive positions on the western bank of the river. The Soviet units managed to capture three small bridgeheads north of Gruzino and in the area of the mouth of the Tigoda River, which, due to their small size and the open nature of the terrain, could not serve to build up forces and further develop the offensive. Attacks to expand these bridgeheads did not achieve their goal. In turn, the Germans managed to retain two significant

bridgehead: near Kirishi and Gruzino. By December 28, Fedyuninsky's army had pushed the enemy behind the Mga-Kirishi railway line.

By the end of December, the German divisions were again on the line from which they began their attack on Tikhvin. The plan of the German command to completely isolate Leningrad failed. Through traffic was restored along the Northern Railway to the Voybokalo station, and from there to the transshipment base on Ladoga. German losses were great.

Well, the troops of the three Soviet armies in the offensive phase of the Tikhvin operation lost 49 thousand people killed and wounded, 70 tanks, 2293 guns and mortars, 82 aircraft. These figures can be considered understated, if only because they do not take into account the losses of the 59th Army. By the way, depicting caricatured Germans in women's headscarves freezing in the Russian frost, Soviet propaganda did not say a word about the fact that all this time Meretskov's troops, with the exception of fresh Siberian divisions, fought in summer uniforms.

The failure of the German offensive on Tikhvin was a heavy blow for the Finns as well. Tippleskirch writes:

"They hoped that the German and Finnish forces would unite near Lake Ladoga and, as a result of this, the complete encirclement of Leningrad, which would soon lead to the fall of the city and make the Finnish front on the Karelian Isthmus redundant. The failure of the German plans, among other things, worsened the position of the Finns also because they were waiting for a quick and decisive victory over the Soviet Union, to which

120

tried with all their might, mobilized everyone capable of bearing arms. This affected the country's economy so hard that the Finnish command was forced to dismiss a large number of people from the army and merge a number of units.

By the spring of 1942, 180 thousand people were released from the front. To all sorrows, on November 28, London presented Helsinki with an ultimatum demanding to stop hostilities against the USSR, and on December 6, on the independence day of Finland, England declared war on the Finns.

Commander Meretskov, during the Tikhvin operation, made a thoughtful conclusion:

"The experience of the battles carried out also showed that the troops must undergo special training for operations in an unfamiliar (?) And climatically and geographically difficult place."

The Headquarters demanded to continue offensive operations without an operational pause and to overcome the line of the Volkhov River as quickly as possible. However, echelons with units of the 2nd shock and 59th armies began to arrive in the area of Malaya Vishera only at the end of December. The rear and artillery lagged behind. not content with

directive instructions, the Kremlin on December 29 sent the famous "driver" L.Z. to the Volkhov Front. Mekhlis, who delivered Stalin's personal letter to Meretskov:

"Dear Kirill Afanasyevich! The case that has been entrusted to you is a historic matter. The liberation of Leningrad, you understand, is a great thing. I would like the forthcoming offensive of the Volkhov Front not to be exchanged for small skirmishes, but to result in a single powerful blow against the enemy. I have no doubt that you will try to turn this offensive into a single and general blow against the enemy, overturning all the calculations of the German invaders. I shake your hand and wish you success. I. Stalin.

But the new front did not have the strength for a single and common strike. In the first days of January, it became obvious that it would take several more days to concentrate the reserve armies. A breakthrough on the move did not work out, the enemy thoroughly entrenched himself behind the river and organized a fire system.

The date for the transition to the offensive was postponed to January 7, 1942.

Smolny, meanwhile, continued to demonstrate activity. "We will fight brutally in all areas," Zhlanov and Khozin reported to the Leader.

Therefore, the 8th Army stubbornly attacked Arbuzov and the Figured Grove from the Nevsky Piglet. Finally, the front commander agreed to the proposal of the Army Military Council to launch an auxiliary attack ten kilometers north of Nevskaya Dubrovka. On December 25, the 4th Separate Marine Brigade made an attempt to cross the Neva in this place. However, the attempt was not successful

121

as well as the offensive in the main direction.

German historians scrupulously calculated that from November 15 to December 27, 1941, the Russians attacked in small battle groups 79 times, up to two companies - 66 times, as part of a battalion and above - 50 times. When repelling 16 tank attacks, 51 tanks were destroyed. By mid-December, about 1,500 people "dropped out" of the 1st Infantry Division.

The 55th Army, which received the immediate task of capturing the village of Krasny Bor, the Ulyanovka station, and then advancing on Tosno, was still trampling around the anti-tank ditch.

Over the past three months, the Germans have erected three rows of barbed wire and slingshots on both sides of it, set up minefields, and placed many firing points. The villages of Putrolovo, Yam-Izhora, Krasny Bor, Feklistovo, Nikolskoye, located on a hill, they turned into powerful strongholds and fired from them with artillery and mortar fire Kolpino, Ponton, Saperny, where Soviet batteries, headquarters, medical battalions were located.

On December 7, the 125th Rifle Division managed to briefly capture 500 meters of the ditch. At the same time, out of 180 people, 17 remained in the ranks. On December 18, a fresh ski battalion under the command of Senior Lieutenant A.F. broke into the anti-tank ditch with a sudden night attack. Zabara, but only lasted until the morning. Colonel V.K. Zinoviev writes:

"On the morning of December 18, the Faptists set up a real barrage of fire around the occupied section of the ditch and threw their elite units of thugs at our ski battalion. The ditch was abandoned. But the "guilty" in this has not been found. He was in the hospital...

And again, as before, the ditch passed from hand to hand. At night we will drive out the Nazis, and during the day they will capture him again. The fate of the ski battalion sharpened in me a long-born feeling of dissatisfaction with what is happening with our strike units. Just think! On December 11, we sent senior lieutenant Zabara from the front to Leningrad to form a ski battalion, and a week after that, the army command threw an untrained and uncohesive unit into battle.

Even earlier, the same thing happened in the neighboring division. To the left of us, closer to the Neva, the shock unit advanced on enemy positions with the support of tanks. But the terrain there was swampy, and the tanks got stuck before reaching the target, and the advancers were stopped by enemy artillery fire. It turned out that the blow was delivered not with a powerful fist, but with outstretched fingers.

On December 20, the 268th Rifle Division, supported by the 84th Separate Tank Battalion, went to storm the moat. The Soviet infantry drove the Germans out of the trenches and reached the outskirts of Krasny Bor, but the blow did not develop. Lieutenant Colonel D.V. Ivanov recalls:

"Our regiment was supposed to advance in the second echelon, but due to poor intelligence

122

enemy firing points, the course of the battle has changed. The 942nd regiment was the first to break through the German defenses in the anti-tank ditch. The introduction of the 947th joint venture ensured the development of a breakthrough along the front and the consolidation of a bridgehead behind the moat. But there was nothing to develop the further success of the offensive. The command did not introduce the army reserve until the Nata division

take possession of the northern outskirts of Krasny Bor. The enemy managed to create a powerful line of defense here, set up firing points in most of the houses, and all attempts to enter Krasny Bor were unsuccessful. The division suffered heavy losses."

The next night, the enemy again took possession of the ditch, and on December 21 the 125th Infantry Division again went on the attack, again captured the section of the ditch in front of Krasny Bor and held it for two days. On December 22, the commander of the division, Major General P.P., died from a direct hit by an artillery shell on a forward observation post. Bogaichuk.

No matter how hard seven Soviet divisions (72, 43, 70, 268, 85, 56, 125th) tried to "distract" two enemy divisions with daily attacks, at the end of December the Germans withdrew part of their forces - the 409th regiment of the 122nd infantry division and the 407th regiment of the 121st division - to Volkhov. Positions south of Kolpino were occupied by the 1st Regiment of the SS Police Division (almost simultaneously, the 291st Infantry Division left the positions near Peterhof). This circumstance allowed the 55th Army to occupy and secure a section of the moat from Yam-Izhora to the Oktyabrskaya railway. During the battles for the anti-tank ditch in the last decade of December alone, the army lost 25,234 people!

The enemy retreated two kilometers to Krasny Bor. 125th Rifle Division, which was received by Major General I.I. Fadeev, immediately received an order to capture this small but well-fortified village.

Stubborn battles for Krasny Bor began. They were unsuccessful: as before, the infantry went to the unsuppressed firing points; there was no interaction with tanks; replenishment was introduced into battle on the move and died. This is what G.A., a participant in those battles, recalls. Chugui:

"At the end of December, a very large offensive began on Krasny Bor. Two companies of the 84th battalion participated. They advanced to the left of the Oktyabrskaya railway station. A swamp, behind it is an anti-tank ditch. The sappers made a passage through the ditch, but it turned out to be too narrow for the HF. The tanks got stuck, the infantry suffered very heavy losses. Krasny Bor remained with the Germans.

Only the sanitary losses of the 55th Army in December 1941 amounted to 41.6%, thus, more than half of its composition was knocked out in a month.

The 42nd Army, according to the reports of the headquarters of the Leningrad Front, either "put itself in order", then resumed the offensive "with the same task."

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All these feverish attacks with the aim of breaking the blockade as soon as possible were

There is one more reason - HUNGER. Although this circumstance does not justify the mediocrity of performance.

123

As a result of a number of miscalculations by the city leadership and the military command, Leningraders found themselves in a tragic situation. Until the end of the summer of 1941, no practical steps were taken to evacuate the population and accumulate food supplies. In June and July, many thousands of tons of grain were transported from the Baltic States by rail, not to Leningrad, but to the east. Moreover, food was exported from the city. At the direction of Zhdanov, trains headed for the western regions in accordance with the mobilization plan turned back.

In early July, an attempt was made to unload Leningrad from unnecessary

"mouths". About 200 thousand children were taken to the regions of the Leningrad region, but less than a month later they had to be hurriedly re-evacuated back. In July-August, 164,000 people left the city for the east, mostly workers of enterprises scheduled for evacuation and members of their families. Of course, most ordinary citizens could not then imagine that the Germans would be at the very walls of Leningrad, but A.A. Zhdanov and M.M. Popov should have shown more foresight. General Nikolai Nikolaevich Voronov (1899-1968), the head of artillery of the Red Army, who arrived at the end of August with a government commission, noted:

"To my surprise, the city continued to live very calmly. One might have thought that the battles were unfolding on the near approaches to Berlin, and not under the walls of Leningrad. The evacuation of the population has not yet begun. The Zles clearly underestimated the threat that was looming over the city."

Seriously, only the NKVD department dealt with evacuation issues, but the heirs of Dzerzhinsky solved their narrowly specific task: to clear Leningrad of the "counter-revolutionary and hostile-minded element." Deportation to Omsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk and Northern Kazakhstan included 95,000 people of Finnish and German nationality, as well as Socialist-Revolutionaries, Trotskyists, nobles, thieves, prostitutes, and other potential enemies of Soviet power. However, these plans could not be implemented within the established time frame.

As a result, by the time the blockade closed, there were 2.8 million civilians in Leningrad and its suburbs, including over 100,000 refugees. At least 1.2 million belonged to the category of "non-active population" (dependents), of which about 400 thousand children. Meanwhile, food supplies according to the norms introduced on July 18 were about a month old. There was still no centralized control over food stocks, which were held by numerous organizations; restaurants were still open, food was sold at commercial prices.

Pyotr Sergeevich Popkov (1903-1950), the Chairman of the Leningrad Executive Committee, who came to his senses, informed the State Defense Committee on September 6 that there was very little food left in the city and asked to expedite its delivery. But all land communications were already cut. On September 9, a decision was made to build a port in Osinovets Bay on the western shore of Lake Ladoga, near the terminus of the suburban railway. It was assumed that through this port it would be possible to take out capital equipment from Leningrad, deliver food and other supplies to the city.

124

supply. By the end of September, Osinovets had to pass 12 ships daily.

However, attacks by enemy aircraft, as well as autumn storms, greatly hampered measures designed to reliably connect Leningrad with the mainland. The Germans actively bombed Osinovets, the Novaya Ladoga cargo pier on the south side of the lake, and everything that could float on the water. Many tugboats and barges sank in the first weeks after the opening of the Ladoga waterway. In addition, the autumn navigation was very short and ended on November 15th.

During this period, 45,000 tons of food, 45,000 rifles, 1,000 machine guns, over 108,000 mines, as well as two rifle divisions and a marine brigade (total strength of 20,000 people) were delivered to the city. Evacuated 33.5 thousand inhabitants. The products were clearly not enough, they were spent almost immediately. And it didn't make sense to bring large supplies to the city, turned into a "powder keg" and, from the point of view of the Kremlin leadership, doomed.

Since November 16, Leningrad could only be supplied by air. For this, 50 Douglas transporters and 10 TB-3 aircraft were allocated, loaded with pressed meat, combined fat and concentrates (special air groups were formed much earlier, but they were engaged in the transportation of exclusively military cargo). They were covered by the 127th, 154th and 286th Fighter Regiments. The supply of food by aviation did not satisfy even a fifth of the needs of the front and the city.

From September 12, workers received 500 grams of bread a day, employees and children - 300 grams, dependents - 250 grams. The rations were successively cut on October 1 and November 13, and on November 20 the biggest reduction in food rations of all time was carried out: workers were now entitled to 250 grams of bread, everyone else - 125 grams. This surrogate "product", half consisting of cotton and flax cake, bran and cellulose, could be called bread only conditionally. Relying on the cards meat and fats were not issued at all.

The ever-living Ilyich, who gave answers to all the questions of his followers in advance, from the distribution of the lottery to the study of the electron, did not leave them without recommendations here. He issued the appropriate instruction long ago: "When it comes to the distribution of food, it is impossible to think that it is necessary to distribute only fairly, but you need to think that this distribution is a method, an instrument, a means for increasing production. It is necessary to give state food support only to those employees who are really needed in conditions of greater productivity, and if food products are distributed as an instrument of politics, then in the direction of reducing those who are not absolutely needed and encouraging those who are really needed.

In the category of "not absolutely necessary", doomed to starvation, in accordance with the precepts of the leader of the world proletariat, employees, the elderly and children, "do not increase production", were identified. Only a third of the population had work cards.

125

In an effort to find a way out, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front proposed to organize a road on the ice of Ladoga. Stalin sanctioned the proposal, although he was skeptical about it, as "unreliable" and of no serious importance. The track was tested on November 22, when the ice thickness reached 18 cm. During the first two weeks of operation, under German bombs, 126 vehicles died on insufficiently strong ice.

After the fall of Tikhvin and the enemy's exit to the Voybokalo station, Stalin put an end to the city. He ordered the Leningraders to form five motor transport battalions with the best drivers and transfer them to the disposal of the Supreme High Command. At the same time, the Douglas were withdrawn to Moscow's disposal. In late December - early January, food did not arrive in Leningrad at all, shops did not open.

The really legendary Military Highway No. 102, known as the "Road of Life", began to function only from mid-January 1942, after the defeat of the Germans near Moscow, Zhdanov's visit to the Kremlin, the release of the "Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on helping Leningrad with food" and the restoration of the railway and blown up bridges between Tikhvin, Volkhov and Voybokalo. At the same time, the mass evacuation of the civilian population began.

By that time, tens of thousands of people had already died of starvation. According to the NKVD Directorate, 11,000 people died of starvation in November, almost 53,000 in December, and 97,000 in January, despite an increase of 50-100 grams of bread. Cases of deaths on the streets, attacks on shops, murders and robberies of citizens in order to take possession of food cards multiplied. During the same period, 413 cases of cannibalism were recorded, a real hunt was carried out on children. People went crazy, lost their human appearance. B. Mikhailov, a blockade survivor from among the "not absolutely necessary", wrote:

"The blockade is the moral and physical mutilation of a person, his soul and body. No, not to an animal, but to some kind of degenerate, mental freak, all thoughts and actions of which are reduced to the size of a ration, a piece of duranda, a handful of grub. How is it possible, for example, to convince a mother that she is capable of killing and eating her infant! And they told me this, and I believe ... I do not regret that I was born in such hard times. I do not regret that fate threw me into the very, very acute war. Offer now a choice - I would go the same way, with the exception of the BLOCKADE. In front of her, without hesitation, I will choose death.

The Soviet Information Bureau did not broadcast about the famine in Leningrad, but used the "plot". Just in January 1942, it told the world about "the bleeding, swollen from hunger, dying from diseases of the population of Germany."

At the same time, the highest party and Soviet functionaries of Leningrad did not consider it shameful to order granular caviar, rum women and Viennese pastries on the "Great Land". Alexey Aleksandrovich Kuznetsov (1905-1950), the first secretary of the Leningrad city committee and regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (1905-1950), at a meeting of the bureau, persuaded the party nomenclature to "enter the position of citizens of the city", emphasizing, "after all, we eat better, we sleep warm, and they will wash our clothes and ironed, and in the light we".

126

In addition to the "red party lords" and employees of the "organs", high-ranking agitators such as the Stalinist court playwright Vsevolod Vishnevsky (1900-1951), who liked to speak to the people with passionate speeches on the verge of hysteria, were among the "really needed" ones. As eyewitnesses recalled, he had enough conscience (or what he had instead)

to eat steaks with white bread - of course, exclusively in the interests of the cause, obeying party discipline and the decision of the political department of the fleet - in front of his wife dying of dystrophy.

Two realities and their inhabitants existed in parallel, intersecting only at rallies and meetings, where the well-fed explained to the hungry their duty to the party and the Soviet Motherland.

The meaning of the reports of city services and headquarters is terrible, set out with a dry formality and bureaucratic cloth of language: "Cleaning dystrophics on the streets of the city (collected 9207 people)".

The city on the Neva was not only in the German military, but also in the information blockade established by the native Soviet authorities. It was so dense that the defense factory workers who were taken out of Leningrad in the summer of 1941 envied those who remained. Leningraders, who had eaten all the crows for a long time, exterminated and dried cats and rats for future use, invented recipes for cooking dishes from leather, wood glue, it's hard to imagine what else, received letters from across the Volga with complaints about the poverty of life in the evacuation and with requests to send chocolates !

In addition to food shortages, fuel was sorely lacking in Leningrad. Stocks of coal and oil ran out at the end of September, the plan for the preparation of firewood approved by the city executive committee was completed by 1%. In October, residential buildings were left without electricity and central heating, and most factories stopped. In November, trams stopped running, and in December, water supply and sewerage systems froze.

The lack of food, light, heat was supplemented by German air raids and continuous artillery shelling. During the three autumn months, more than 10,000 shells and almost 68,000 bombs hit the city. As a result, 3,840 people died and about 14,000 were injured. Judging by the fact that the south side of the streets was considered safe, the Finns did not shell the city, and it was the threat of Finnish "long-range guns" that became the official reason for unleashing the Winter War in 1939.

The food supply of the front inevitably worsened, and soldiers' rations also had to be cut. The Red Army norm of bread on the front line was 500 grams, in the second echelon - 300. Once a day, a portion of soup was given out. The fighters were out of shelters around the clock, which they did not bother to build in the everyday life of endless attacks, suffered from malnutrition and frostbite. On December 1, 1941, 6,061 people were ill with a severe form of dystrophy in the troops of the Leningrad Front operating in the blocked territory; on January 1, 1942, the number of patients increased to 12,604; by February 1, to 13,719 people. In the spring, due to acute vitamin deficiency, many developed scurvy and "night blindness", in

At dusk, on the front roads, one could often see processions reminiscent of the famous painting by Pieter Brueghel: one sighted soldier slowly led a string of others.

The absence of tobacco greatly undermined the morale of the soldiers. The famous artist Yuri Vladimirovich Nikulin recalled:

"Smokers just went crazy, and everyone thought painfully where to get at least one cigarette. They regretted how carelessly they smoked in peacetime.

Only the commanders were sometimes given thin cigarettes, mixed in half with leaves, called, you might guess, "dystrophics."

The Leningrad famine was the result of the organizational miscalculations of the Soviet bureaucracy, which had no habit of taking care of the population, the Bolshevik conviction that "distribution is a method of increasing production," and also widespread theft. Suffice it to say that, without any blockade, the soldiers of the Kalinin, Don, Stalingrad and other fronts starved and died in 1942 from dystrophy.

128

Chapter 6. EVACUATION OF HANKO (November 1941)

In November 1941, the Baltic Fleet carried out an operation to evacuate Hanko (Gangut), a naval base rented from Finland "at gunpoint", which allowed control of the northern part of the entrance to the Gulf of Finland.

The land defense of the peninsula consisted of two defensive lines that blocked the 22-kilometer isthmus. The coastal defense sector had several railway and stationary batteries with guns ranging in caliber from 305 to 45 mm. Air defense consisted of twelve batteries of 76-mm anti-aircraft guns and 11 fighters. The protection of the water area was carried out by seven hunting boats.

On the peninsula was the 8th rifle brigade of Colonel N.P. Simonyak, reinforced by an artillery regiment, an anti-aircraft artillery battalion, tank and engineer battalions. The total strength of the garrison is 27 thousand people with 114 guns, 50 T-26 and T-37 tanks. Shortly before the war, Major General SI became the commander of the naval base. Kabanov. To capture this Soviet base, the Finns formed the Hanko strike group as part of the 17th Infantry Division, with reinforcement units and an artillery group (153 guns).

On the night of July 1, they tried to seize the peninsula with a sudden assault, but were repulsed. In the future, on the isthmus well fortified by both sides - three Soviet defensive lines (the third was erected after the start of hostilities) and four Finnish ones - there were almost no active operations. The struggle was reduced to systematic artillery shelling and small landings on the islands adjacent to Khanko.

In August, the 46th

a separate rifle battalion (1100 people), and the 219th rifle regiment was formed from the sapper battalion, engineering units and rear units. Now the 8th brigade was equal in strength to the rifle division. On September 7, the garrison of the island of Osmussar, numbering about a thousand people, went under direct subordination to the base commander.

General Kabanov was assigned the following tasks: a) to prevent the enemy fleet from breaking through the Central mine and artillery position into the Gulf of Finland and 6) to divert as many enemy forces from the Leningrad Front as possible by stubborn defense. But, if we discard the patriotic tales of Glavpur workers about the "mass heroism" of the defenders of Khanko and that "the title of "Gangut" inspired horror in the enemy", then the result will remain bare: both tasks had no solution.

Firstly, the German battleships, cruisers and destroyers did not break through to Kronstadt and were not going to break through. Let us again refer to the opinion of Admiral N.M. Sobolev:

"The laying by the Germans of a large minefield in the Baltic testified that they did not intend to break into the Gulf of Finland, they were saving large ships for operations in the Atlantic. Thus, the creation of a mine-artillery position at

129

entry into the Gulf of Finland did not make sense. Once again, we were captured by the template.

Secondly, it is difficult to imagine how the Soviet garrison locked up on the peninsula could divert large forces from Leningrad. Indeed, already in August, the command transferred most of the 17th Finnish division to the Karelian Isthmus, and one infantry regiment and several field batteries remained in the Hanko area, coastal batteries, border guards and separate battalions remained on the islands. The intensity of shelling and air operations has significantly decreased.

Finally, after four months of siege, it became clear to the KBF headquarters that there was no point in holding Hanko. The fleet could not use the peninsula as an operational base, the Central mine-artillery position after leaving Tallinn completely lost all significance, the impending freeze-up put the garrison in a hopeless position of complete loss of communications. On October 23, the Headquarters of the All-Union Command decided to leave the peninsula.

Soviet losses for 165 days of "heroic defense" amounted to 797 people killed and about 1,200 wounded, enemy losses - of course - were considered "enormous".

So, almost 28 thousand fighters and commanders from the Hanko Peninsula and Osmussar Island were subject to evacuation. The plan was to do this in two stages. On the first, several detachments of ships were supposed to take out parts of the second echelons, rear, equipment and food supplies, on the second - the troops of the front line of defense. The material part and objects that are not subject to evacuation,

should have been destroyed.

In view of the loss during the "successful" Tallinn breakthrough of the majority of mobilized transports and the initial absence of special landing transport ships in the fleet, it was decided to carry out military transport on warships. The route of 140 miles (260 km) from Goglanla to Khanko and back was recommended to be overcome at night, since fighter cover was not provided at the crossing.

The leadership of the operation was entrusted to the commander of the light forces detachment of the KBF, Vice Admiral Valentin Petrovich Drozd (1906-1943). General Kabanov was responsible for covering the withdrawal of troops from defensive lines, boarding ships, and removing the garrison from Osmussar Island. On Gogland, as during the Tallinn breakthrough, the rescue team of I. G. Svyatov again deployed.

The main danger was still posed by German, Finnish and Soviet mines, which were stuffed with the Gulf of Finland. Meanwhile, the "red naval commanders" were still afraid of the appearance of German battleships near the walls of the "cradle of the revolution". Therefore, they devoted autumn to the creation of a new mine and artillery position on the outskirts of Kronstadt. In total, the Baltics in 1941 dumped more than 12 thousand mines into the sea, almost all the stocks available in the warehouses. The Germans, meanwhile, continued to mine the middle part of the Gulf of Finland.

130

There was still no reliable data on the mine situation at Tributs headquarters, the headquarters did not organize mine reconnaissance and systematic sweeping, because there was no such possibility. The instruction on the combat activity of minesweeping forces for the reliable escort of one detachment of ships required the involvement of an outfit of nine basic minesweepers, meanwhile, only seven of them remained in the Baltic Fleet, and only five of them could go to sea. The route of movement, of course, was laid through the "well-known" Yuminda barrier. The ensuing period of storms and the appearance of ice also did not contribute to the operation.

Only the Finnish troops, allegedly "continuously storming" Hanko, did not interfere with the evacuation.

The first contingent of troops was taken out on October 26. A detachment of ships consisting of three trawlers and three boats of the Ministry of Defense, under the command of Captain 3rd Rank V.P. Likholetov, for the sake of SAVING time (!) Followed Hanko without trawls. As a result, the minesweeper T-203 "Cartridge" blew up and sank in the area of Keri Island. The rest were delivered to Oranienbaum by a battalion of the 270th Infantry Regiment with light artillery. This allowed the command of the fleet to report to the Military Council of the Leningrad Front on the readiness for the operation. On October 31, the go-ahead was received for the start of the evacuation.

By that time, a detachment under the command of Admiral Drozd had been formed in Kronstadt: the destroyers Stoikiy and Strong, the mine layer Marty, five base minesweepers, six patrol boats and three torpedo boats. For operational support of transitions at positions at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland

there were S-9 and Sh-324 submarines, and in the Tallinn area - the S-7 boat.

On the night of November 2, a detachment of ships in two groups began to move towards Hanko. The main forces made the transition safely and took on board 4246 commanders and Red Army soldiers and two field artillery divisions.

A group (trawler, three torpedo boats and two patrol boats) that had lingered and left separately was attacked by German aircraft. As a result, all torpedo boats (ŷŷŷ-72, ŷŷŷ-88, ŷŷŷ-102) were sunk, and the damaged hunter was towed to Lavensari Island. Drozd's detachment arrived in Kronstadt on November 4 without loss, delivering 4246 people.

Even before his return, a detachment of captain 2nd rank V.M. began to move to Hanko. Narykov as part of the destroyers "Severe" and "Sharp-witted", four torpedo boats and four patrol boats in support of three base minesweepers. He arrived at his destination without incident, received more than 2,000 people, and set off on his return journey on the evening of November 4.

Near the island of Naissar, the destroyer "Sharp-witted" left the swept lane and captured two mines at once with paravanes. From their explosions, the ship's ammunition flew off and it immediately sank. The commander died - captain 2nd rank V.I. Maslov and with him about 400 officers, Red Army and Red Navy. 80 crew members and 233 people from among the evacuees were removed from the destroyer. They were brought back to Hanko on the T-205 Gafel trawler and three sea hunters.

131

The remaining ships of the detachment arrived at Gogland, delivering 1263 people.

On November 9, the third detachment set off on the same route under the leadership of the commander of the battleship October Revolution, Rear Admiral M.3. Moskalenko. The detachment included the leader "Leningrad", the destroyer "Stoyky", the mine layer "Ural", the transport "Zhdanov", five base minesweepers, four hunter's boats. The passage began in difficult weather conditions, the wind increased to seven points, the ships often lost sight of each other and could not follow the trawls. Two minesweepers collided, one of them was seriously damaged. The detachment commander decided to return to the raid of the island of Hogland.

On the evening of November 11, the ships again went to Hanko, accompanied by only three minesweepers, and the largest units - "Ural" and "Zhdanov" - did not have guard paravanes. On the night of November 11-12, the leader of "Leningrad" captured two mines with his paravane. From their explosion, the ship received damage to the hull, and had to anchor. The transport "Zhdanov" with a displacement of 3869 tons, which was following it in the wake, also stopped. Admiral Moskalenko, not having reached Hanko 65 miles, turned the detachment on the back course to assist Leningrad. At this time, the leader's commander decided to independently return to the base. The transport was put in the lead, and the Leningrad, on which the gyrocompass failed, fell into its wake. As a result, Zhdanov, who did not have any means of protection, soon stumbled upon a mine and sank after 8 minutes, his team managed to be removed by the arrived hunter. After night ordeals, the surviving ships again concentrated at Gogland.

On the evening of November 13, the Moskalenko detachment, after being reorganized, again went along the previous path. Now it included the destroyers Proud and Severe, the Ural minelayer, six MO boats and four minesweepers. The L-2 and M-98 submarines, which were on their way to combat positions, joined the convoy. Immediately after midnight, the minesweeper T-206 "Verp" was blown up on the beam of Cape Yuminda. Rescuing his team, the MO-301 boat was killed by a mine. Then the submarine /J]-2 was blown up twice, only three people escaped from it. From the explosion in the paravane, the flagship destroyer "Severe" received heavy damage, it had to be flooded. Admiral Moskalenko boarded a patrol boat and returned to Gogland guarding two minesweepers.

After that, the commander of the minelayer division, captain 1st rank N.I., took command of the remaining ships. Meshchersky. On his orders, the detachment was led by the destroyer "Proud" in providing one minesweeper. The M-98 submarine separated and went to the position area on its own. An hour later, she died with the entire crew. Finally, at 3.26, the destroyer Proud was blown up by two mines and sank. As a result, on the morning of November 14, only the Ural minelayer, the T-215 minesweeper and three small hunters arrived at the Hanko raid.

The death of the third detachment of ships somewhat stimulated the mental activity of the staff officers, who nevertheless decided to change the route and use the northern fairway, although it passed close to the Finnish skerries, but it made it possible to go around the Yuminda barrier. Due to the LOW activity of enemy aircraft, small-size transport vehicles were involved in the evacuation

132

facilities, converted trawlers and small tonnage vessels.

Until November 29, three detachments removed from Khanko about 9,200 people, 18 T-26 tanks, 720 tons of food, 250 tons of ammunition. At the same time, the garrison of Osmussar Island was transferred to Hanko. Of the 29 ships and vessels participating in the transportation during this period, the Azimut net layer and two converted minesweepers with 728 evacuees were killed by mines. About 12 thousand people still remain on the peninsula.

To evacuate the last echelon of troops to Hanko on November 30, a detachment arrived under the flag of Admiral V.T. Drozda as part of the destroyers Stoikiy and Glorious, six trawlers, seven patrol boats and the Iosif Stalin turboelectric ship. The next day, the last detachment arrived under the command of Lieutenant Commander P.V. Shvetsov, which included the Volga gunboat, the Virtsaitis patrol boat, two minesweepers, two MO boats and transport No. 538.

On the night of December 1-2, the withdrawal of troops from defensive positions and their landing on ships began. The last to withdraw were cover units and sappers who mined roads and base facilities. The Finns did not provide any obstacles. The trawler "Gaffe" removed the last 340 of its defenders from the island of Osmussar.

At nightfall on June 2, Shvetsov's low-speed ships left Hanko, taking on board about 3,000 people. The detachment relatively safely reached Gogland, having lost the Virtsaitis patrol ship on the mines, from which they managed to remove people.

At 22:00, Drozl's detachment left the liquidated base. The ships were loaded beyond the norm. So, "Joseph Stalin" took on board 5589 people, 1200 tons of food, destroyers - up to 600 people each, minesweepers - 300 people or more. In the second hour of the night on December 3, on the approach to the island of Naissar, "Joseph Stalin" was blown up by two mines. The ship, having lost its course and control, began to drift in the minefield and soon a third explosion was heard. An attempt by the destroyer Glorious to take the turboship in tow was unsuccessful. In addition, a Finnish battery of 305-mm guns from Makiloto Island opened fire on the convoy. The ships of the detachment removed 1740 people from the transport and continued the transition.

The people remaining on the "Stalin" were supposed to be removed by the forces of Svyatov's detachment, but the rescuers, who did not have minesweepers, could not get through to the ship. The commander of the fleet, everyone who could, ate his bald patch with hints that a ship with that name should not fall into the hands of the enemy, but nothing could be done. Tributs reported to Moscow that "Joseph Stalin" had died as a result of heavy damage from mine explosions and detonation of ammunition. In reality, the half-submerged turbo ship ran aground off the Surupi Peninsula and was captured by the Finns. According to the German admiral Friedrich Ruge, "several thousand corpses and living people" were found on it.

In total, 88 ships and vessels participated in the operation to evacuate the Hanko naval base, of which 25 were lost (including 3 destroyers, 1 patrol boat, 5 trawlers, 2 icebreakers, 5 torpedo boats and 7 patrol boats),

133

mainly mines. Losses on the passage amounted to about 5,000 people, including 500 sailors. 22,822 people, 26 tanks, 14 aircraft, 72 guns, 56 mortars, 854 machine guns, about 20,000 screw, 1,000 tons of ammunition and 1,700 tons of food were delivered to Kronstadt and Leningrad.

Immediately after the end of the evacuation, Zhdanov and Khozin informed Stalin: "Despite the heavy losses, we believe that the result has exceeded all expectations."

Following them, Soviet historiography considers this operation to be very "successful".

The 8th Infantry Brigade became part of the 23rd Army and took up defensive positions on the Karelian Isthmus. At the same time, by decision of the land command, without any pressure from the enemy, garrisons were evacuated from the islands of the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland - Big and Small Tyuters, Bjerke, Gogland, Sommers. About 10 thousand people were taken out of them, who were immediately thrown into the trenches. Until the end of the evacuation from Hanko, about 400 people remained on Gogland, on December 11 they were also removed. At the same time, the ice was crushed by torpedo boats TKA-12 and TKA-42, hunting boats MO-304, 305, 307, 313, 405, 406, 407.

The Baltic fleet, locked in Kronstadt and preparing for suicide, refused any active operations at sea until spring.

In January, the 168th Rifle Division was added to the Oranienbaum patch, the 2nd and 5th Naval Infantry Brigades became the 48th and 71st Rifle Divisions. The 50th Infantry Brigade was formed on the basis of the 3rd Marine Regiment.

134

Chapter 7. WINTER OFFENSIVE OF THE RKKA

(January - February 1942)

On January 5, a meeting of the Headquarters was held in the Kremlin, at which a decision was made on the general offensive of the Red Army in the space from the Baltic to the Black Sea, inflicting a strategic defeat on the Wehrmacht and entering the state border of the USSR. In the defeat of the Army Group "North", according to this grandiose plan, the Volkhov Front should have played the main role.

The troops of his right wing, in cooperation with the Leningrad Front, were to defeat the 18th German Army and unblock Leningrad; the troops of the left wing were tasked with defeating the enemy's 16th Army in cooperation with the right flank of the Northwestern Front. Leningraders were to "assist the Volkhov Front in defeating the enemy defending near Leningrad, and in liberating Leningrad from the blockade."

The troops of the North-Western Front were to strike in the direction of Staraya Russa - Soltsy - Dno to cut the communications of the Novgorod grouping of the enemy and defeat it.

The overall balance of forces in the northwestern direction was in favor of the Red Army. As of January 1, the German Army Group North, according to Soviet data, had 665 thousand soldiers and officers, 6 thousand guns and mortars, 160 tanks and assault guns, 250 aircraft of all types.

The troops of the Leningrad, Volkhov and North-Western fronts, there were about a million people, 9 thousand guns and mortars, at least 400 tanks. The headquarters also proceeded from the fact that the successful development of the counter-offensive near Moscow would not allow the German command to reinforce Army Group North with troops withdrawn from other sectors of the Soviet-German front.

Under General Meretskov (Volkhov Front) were 28 rifle and cavalry divisions, 9 separate brigades, 25 separate tank and ski battalions: 242 thousand people, 2295 guns and mortars, 220 tanks. The front outnumbered the enemy in men at least 2.2 times, in tanks - 3.2 times, in artillery - 1.5 times, in aviation - 13 times.

The 54th army of Fedyuninsky had 11 divisions, 2 "dismounted" tank brigades and one naval rifle brigade, 2 separate battalions (83.5 thousand people in total), 1156 artillery and mortar barrels, 18 tanks.

In the 8th and 55th armies of the Leningrad Front, rushing towards them, there were 10 rifle divisions, 1 rifle and 2 tank brigades.

Six Soviet armies were opposed by three German army corps - the 28th, 1st, 38th, plus the "defeated" 39th motorized corps.

The offensive was to be carried out in a deserted wooded and swampy area, in

135

off-road conditions, in deep snow, which has covered non-freezing abysses since the Ice Age, which initially excluded a wide maneuver.

By the appointed time, the Volkhov Front was not ready. The main reason was the delay in the concentration of troops. In the 59th Army, five divisions managed to turn around by the deadline, three more were on the way. In the 2nd Ularian Army, a little more than half of the formations occupied their initial position, the rest followed along the only railway. Troops reached the front line with great difficulty:

"They went only at night, during the day they hid in the forest. In order to make a road in deep snow, columns had to be built fifteen people in a row. The first rows walked, trampling down the snow, which in places reached the waist.

Ten minutes later, the leading row moved aside and was attached to the tail of the column. The difficulty of the movement was further aggravated by the fact that on the way there were unfrozen swampy places and streams with ice on the surface. Shoes got wet and frozen. It was impossible to trick her, since it was not allowed to make fires in the parking lots. The convoy horses were exhausted. I ran out of fuel and

mapins

stopped. Stocks of ammunition, equipment, food had to be carried on ourselves.

Let's add to this 30-40-degree frosts and the strictest prohibition of the command, up to the execution of violators, on making fires. On the other side, it was possible to get shot and for frostbite: they say, he deliberately frostbite, a scoundrel, in order to desert from the front (General Haller, a sort of fool, just at that time was tormented by the question of how to explain to the Fuhrer that the troops "can no longer withstand frosts exceeding 30 degrees).

Aviation did not arrive, the Air Force of the Volkhov Front had 118 combat aircraft, including only 6 bombers and 19 attack aircraft. There was no sleigh transport and field kitchens, the accumulation of ammunition and logistics was extremely slow. The hastily formed front had practically no rear,

By the beginning of January, the troops had no more than one quarter of the ammunition, instead of the five required for a breakthrough, and completely insignificant supplies of food and fodder. The arriving formations did not have weapons, means of communication, or transport. For example, the 378th rifle division was armed with only 379 rifles, 3 heavy and 15 light machine guns, and 3 mortars. For the entire 374th division, there were 344 rifles and 3 mortars. Nevertheless, they were immediately, "in order not to lose time," sent to the area of concentration in the expectation that the Germans would withdraw anyway, and that weapons would be "served" by the start of the offensive. A veteran of the 372nd division recalls how during the formation of the 1236th regiment, due to the lack of weapons, the soldiers were ordered to make wooden rattles in order to simulate firing during tactical exercises. The study ended quickly, and 30% of the regiment's personnel went into their first battle with rattles.

The supply remained extremely unsatisfactory almost all the time. There were no field hospitals. The only thing they knew about the enemy was that he was and was on the west bank. However, again "the plight of the working people of Leningrad demanded immediate offensive action."

136

Yes, and General of the Army Meretskov could not object to the "Kremlin Gorp", he was afraid of him to the point of convulsions. As General V.N. Nikolsky, who at that time worked at the headquarters of the Volkhov Front, at each call to the direct wire, the commander turned sharply pale and did not immediately answer the phone. Kirill Afanasyevich was a broken man. Having made a brilliant military career in the 1930s, having served as Chief of the General Staff and Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, he was arrested on the first day of the war.

Pretty soon, NKVD investigators with boots and rubber truncheons knocked out of Meretskov a confession in organizing a conspiracy to overthrow the worker-peasant power, in espionage in favor of the German and British intelligence services at the same time, as well as testimonies against "accomplices" - G.M. Stern, A.D. Loktionova, P.V. Rychagova, D.G. Pavlova, G.K. Zhukova, M.P. Kirponos and many others who vomited from pain in the neighboring cells of the Sukhanov prison (Stern, Rychagov, Loktionov) or who already fought with the Wehrmacht (Pavlov, Zhukov, Kirponos). Meretskov later encrypted this terrible period of his life in his memoirs as serving in the position of "permanent adviser at the Headquarters of the High Command."

In September 1941, the general, who dreamed only of a quick death, was unexpectedly dressed in a brand new uniform and taken to Comrade Stalin. The leader inquired about Meretskov's health. Of course, he felt good and was eager to fight. Then the leader "calmly acquainted" with the military situation and sent, in company with L.3. Mekhlis, representative of the Headquarters on the North-Western Front. Some of the other "conspirators" were shot.

At the front, the "red professor" taught the general who returned to favor another clear lesson: having arrived in the 34th army defeated by the enemy, Mekhlis ordered immediately, before the formation of army headquarters officers, to shoot the artillery commander, Major General V.S. Goncharov "for disorganization in the management of artillery by the army and personal cowardice." Which was immediately fulfilled.

And Meretskov soon led the 7th Army, then the Volkhov Front. He tried his best to "justify the trust" and always remembered that at any moment he could again be in the hands of the clean hands of strikers like Shvartsman or Rhodes. Therefore, the commander not only never tried to challenge Moscow's instructions, but often he himself "ran ahead of the locomotive", flooding the General Staff with utopian plans for the most decisive most offensive operations, regardless of the losses and the state of the troops entrusted to him.

On January 7, without waiting for the concentration of all formations, the troops of the Volkhov Front, simultaneously with the Leningrad and North-Western Fronts, went on the offensive. The main blow from the bridgehead at the mouth of the Tigoda was delivered by the 4th Army, which possessed almost half of the front's artillery and two-thirds of the armored vehicles. Formations of the 59th and 2nd shock armies were introduced into battle sequentially as they arrived.

The offensive of the 54th Army, in which five rifle divisions, two brigades and three artillery regiments of the RGK took part, was deployed from Voronovo in the direction of Tosno by two operational groups - Sinyavino and Volkhov. Towards her

137

Sviridov's 55th army made its way.

By January 12, the red flags were supposed to fly over Lyuban and Novgorod, but it turned out differently. Heavy fighting continued for several days, but it was not possible to break through the enemy defenses anywhere. Artillery fired into the white light, then rifle, ski and sapper units, over and over again went into frontal attacks on firing points. Says the former commander of the control platoon of the 894th artillery regiment of the 327th rifle division P.P. Dmitriev.

"The artillery preparation was clearly insufficient. For each howitzer we had only 20 shells. Having shot them, we turned out to be unarmed and could not suppress the enemy's firing points. The infantry, defenseless through the hurricane fire of the German artillery, striking from the high western shore, fell on the Volkhov ice with thick black dots: the shooters were not supposed to wear camouflage suits.

The fighting once again convincingly showed that you can't take a German with a simple quantitative superiority. The troops did not know how to fight. The newly arrived divisions did not complete the full course of training. They were sent to the front without having received skills in tactics and in handling weapons. And if a fighter received a rifle only before the attack, the use of it in inept hands is a little more than from the rattles with which the 372nd division went on the attack (even less: in the first battle, and it was at night, the "treshotniks" had on the Germans such a powerful psychological impact that they panicked and captured the stronghold).

A number of units and subunits were completely formed from the inhabitants of the steppe or Central Asian regions, many of whom found themselves in the forests for the first time in their lives and, in order not to get lost, went on the attack in a "bunch". Ski battalion fighters

"reacted to the terrain" much better, but they did not own skis and preferred to move on foot. The front commander reported to the General Staff:

"Of the seven ski battalions, when checking them, it turned out that the personnel of three battalions were completely unprepared for moving and fighting on skis."

The commanders did not know how to manage units and organize interaction between them. Many forbade the signalmen to turn on the radios, fearing that the Germans would "bear" and "cover" with fire. At the headquarters, plans were made and beautiful maps were drawn to defeat the enemy with an estimated rate of advance across the virgin snow of up to 4 kilometers per day, with breakthroughs, access to the operational space and timing of the "red" lines occupied. The opposition of the "blue" in these plans was not provided.

For example, Colonel General I.S. Katyshkin, a former officer of the operational department, without a shadow of embarrassment, reports that "the positive aspects" of the activities of the headquarters of the 59th Army during this period should include "in general, the entire development of a plan to defeat the Chudovskaya enemy grouping", in which one can clearly see "the maturity of our tactical and operational thoughts", as well as the development of directives, instructions and orders.

138

"But the trouble is: they reached the troops with a big delay ... And as for the concentration of all artillery in the direction of the main blow, this decision sometimes did not come true at all ... We then did not really know how to carry out the half-hearted." Or even better: "for some reason they forgot about it."

The headquarters were not put together, they lost control almost immediately, as soon as the troops began to move, they had almost no technical means of communication, and where they were, they did not know how to use this "technique". And besides, here's another surprise: "the enemy, with his persistent counterattacks, in every possible way prevented us from putting this plan into practice."

In short, the headquarters were more like classes for the mentally retarded than the "brains of the armies." It is impossible to take seriously the arguments that, while working "with an overstrain", the generals "acquired some experience in leading the operation", and the employees of the operational department "gained skills in developing and bringing various combat documents to the troops."

And the technique was often still the same! For example, 122-mm howitzer fire spotters, following in infantry combat formations, received the latest "secret" TAT telephone sets of domestic production, which provided some kind of audibility at a distance of up to 100 meters.

The commander of the 2nd shock army (Sokolov), promoted to commander from the post of deputy people's commissar of internal affairs, proved to be a complete nerd in the military field. He had no idea even about where the entrusted

troops to him, but he composed for these troops the likeness of Rostopchin's posters:

"Do not succumb to the cold, do not dress up as Ryazan women, be young and not succumb to frost."

The commander of the Volkhov Front (Meretskov), who had accumulated rich experience in leading armies and districts, fought against the "Frankists" and "White Finns", also proved to be, to put it mildly, an insufficiently qualified military leader. True, unlike Zhukov, after the war he admitted this.

The front did not have a pronounced strike force, its troops were stretched in one echelon along the banks of the Volkhov River, conducting continuous reconnaissance in force along the entire 150-kilometer line in order to open enemy positions and search for weaknesses in them. There was no second echelon at all, and there was nothing to build up the strike in order to develop success in depth. There was one division and 3 (three!) Tanks in reserve. In the event of a breakthrough of the enemy defenses, the front headquarters pinned all its hopes on the "fresh army" promised by Comrade Stalin. Meretskov, who began to see clearly years later, writes:

"Meanwhile, the main forces had to be concentrated from the very beginning on the main strike sector ... We also failed to find the correct form and correct methods of operational interaction between the armies of the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts. This can be partly explained by the lack of close contact between me and the commander of the Leningrad Front, M.S. Khozin. As a result, the blows of the fronts went in divergent directions and did not coincide entirely in time. The Nazis received

139

the ability to repel napalm in turn and carry out the delivery of operational reserves from the rear.

Apparently, in 1942, both Meretskov and Khozin, having served in the Red Army for 25 years, understood little about their profession. The matter was aggravated by the fact that they acted separately, and it seems that quite deliberately. The highest Soviet generals were still convinced that the Germans were almost defeated, in the conditions of the Russian winter they were not capable of serious resistance, and therefore everyone mentally tried on the wreath of the winner and twirled holes for orders.

As a result, already on the second day it became clear that the offensive had failed, as soon as it began. The Soviet units rolled back to their original lines. The military council of the Volkhov Front asked the Headquarters to postpone the operation for another three days, Stalin generously gave five, allowing the front troops to postpone the offensive until January 13. A record of a telephone conversation between Stavka and the front has been preserved:

"According to all reports, you are not ready to attack by the 11th. If this is true, it should be postponed for a day or two in order to advance and break through the enemy's defenses. In order to advance and break through the enemy defenses, each army must have a strike group of at least three divisions, and, in addition, it is necessary to concentrate 50-60 guns in the strike area.

groups of each army to support the strike group ...

The Russians say: if you hurry, you will slander people. You did just that, hurried with the offensive without preparing it, and made people laugh. If you remember, I suggested that you postpone the offensive if Sokolov's shock army is not ready, and now you are reaping the fruits of your haste.

And although Meretskov was well aware that a thorough preparation of the operation required at least 15-20 days, he did not dare to object: "we gladly jumped at the postponement proposed by the Headquarters." So did the Supreme Commander rush the front, or were the generals themselves engaged in fraud, in a hurry to please the Leader with success? Not without reason, Marshal Ivan Khristoforovich Bagramyan (1897-1982), regarding the assignment of impossible tasks to the troops, noted that "the optimism of the center was largely inspired by our rather peppy reports."

While the protracted concentration of Soviet troops was going on, the enemy was preparing for defense. The immediate operational task of Army Group North was to gain a foothold and hold on to the line of the Volkhov River and the railroad line from the Kirishi station to the Mga station.

The Germans expected the Russians to attack in prepared positions, equipped with a system of resistance nodes and strongholds, with a large number of bunkers and machine-gun sites. The front line of defense passed along the western bank of the river, the surface of which was covered with a dense system of all TYPES OF FIRE.

The second defensive line ran along the embankment of the Kirishi-Novgorod railway line. It was a line of fortified settlements with well-organized fire communications between them. All space

140

between the Volkhov and the railway, wire fences were densely entangled, and minefields were covered. In the operational depth, large settlements were turned into powerful, by Soviet standards, nodes of resistance, the approaches to them were blocked by high snow banks, watered with water.

But by German standards, the defenses were just beginning to be built, were weak and under-equipped. Here is how Hartwig Polman, former commander of the 284th regiment of the 96th Infantry Division, analyzes the disposition:

"To this was added an unusual devilish cold in the complete absence of winter uniforms, while the enemy was comfortably dressed, accustomed to the climate, fantastically unpretentious in terms of food and had many other advantages, fortunately, except for one - the ability to use these superior qualities to achieve real results."

Positions along the Volkhov were occupied by five infantry divisions - the 250th (Spanish), 126th, 215th, 61st, 21st. From the Kirishi station along the railway to Mgu, the 11th, 96th and 269th infantry divisions held the defense against Fedyuninsky's troops. In the second echelon were the 291st and 254th Infantry Divisions and the 9th SS Regiment. The badly battered formations of the 39th motorized corps were put in order, replenished with equipment and people in the Lyuban region. The 285th security division was stationed in the Eglino area.

The most promising direction of the breakthrough was the Moscow-Leningrad railway and highway. Naturally, it was here that the Germans created many firing points and concentrated the bulk of the artillery.

There was no question of a sudden attack: everyone knew about the upcoming offensive. A wide maneuver was also ruled out: the lack of roads and difficult terrain riveted the troops to certain directions. The Soviet commanders decided to outwit the enemy, acting "in a Suvorov way" - with a bayonet and a grenade through swamps and impenetrable forests.

There are no barriers for Soviet soldiers

On January 10, General Sokolov was removed from command by the Stavka. The 2nd shock army, on which great hopes were placed, was led by Lieutenant General N.K. Klykov. The army was additionally strengthened by the 259th rifle division, barrel and rocket artillery. The 52nd Army was received by Lieutenant General V.F. Yakovlev. The number of ammunition in the troops was brought up to one ammunition load per division, which, of course, was completely insufficient, based not only on the statutory norms, but also due to the complete lack of information about the enemy. Firing was planned not for specific targets, but for areas.

The quality of the troops has not improved. For example, the formation of the 59th separate shock brigade of Lieutenant Colonel Chernik began at the end of November 1941 in the Saratov region, in the twentieth of December it was urgently sent to the front without weapons and personnel, on the way near Penza, recruits were loaded into trains, with whom the commanders units began to study the charters, and political workers explained "the requirements of the party to the defenders

141

Motherland" and "educated" contempt for death.

Near Moscow, during the week, the fighters were taught mainly two tricks - dashes and throws to the attack, in Yaroslavl the brigade received cannons and mortars, in Bulogoshcha, from where the six-day march to the front line began, - winter uniforms and already in Malaya Vishera - small arms. The day before the start of the offensive, without any respite, after exhausting night marches, the 59th brigade took up its original position in the second echelon of the 2nd shock army. But this brigade, by Soviet standards, could be considered a trained unit: its soldiers held rifles in their hands for three days and, importantly, understood Russian

The former head of the political department of the front, General K.F. Kalashnikov proudly tells how an agitator of the political department of the 59th Army in a couple of hours taught two companies of marching reinforcements to shoot, disassemble and assemble a rifle, staffed by Tajiks and Uzbeks, who had never seen weapons in their eyes:

“The most amazing thing: it turns out that when he began to train those marching companies, he did not even know a word in Uzbek and Tajik. How were you understood? I was surprised. What kind of communists will we be if people don't understand us? he simply replied.

You will not immediately understand, after reading this passage, whether the general was a complete idiot, or his two literary editors, or whether they considered us readers as such. And the “most striking” thing is that these companies, who did not know a word of Russian, “simply” went into battle on the same day, immediately after the “training”. However, I would be surprised if it turned out differently: “what kind of communists would we be then”?

Veterans tell how these soldiers from the “outskirts of the southern Soviet republics” collected German wooden-handled grenades for heating and threw them into fires. Was it worth it to take the guys so far, who, under the “bloody tsarism”, were not drafted into the army even during the world war, to drive trains across the country in order to stupidly and soullessly kill them without any benefit to the cause.

On January 13, 1942, at 9:30 am, the “Battle on the Volkhov” began.

The Soviet offensive developed painfully slowly. The Germans put up stubborn resistance everywhere. In the sector of the 4th Army, they themselves attacked, and the troops of General Ivanov, instead of an offensive, fought defensive battles. The 59th Army, which, inflicting the main blow with five divisions from Gruzino, was supposed to defeat the enemy grouping in the Chudovo region and seize this railway junction, got stuck in continuous minefields in front of the positions of the enemy's 61st Infantry Division, covered by deadly machine-gun and mortar fire. The battalions did not even manage to cling to the opposite

shore.

Success was indicated only in the direction of action of the 2nd shock and 52nd armies. By the end of the second day, their strike groups crossed the Volkhov and captured a number of settlements, wedged into the German defenses at the junction of the 126th and 215th

142

infantry divisions. The former commander of the 327th Infantry Division, Major General I.M. Antyufeyev:

“There were about 800-1000 meters to the front edge of the enemy. Deep snow, especially in the river valley, frost up to 30 degrees, heavy machine-gun and mortar fire from the enemy, and we have neither skis nor camouflage coats ... The fighters had to crawl through the space to the line of attack, burrowing into the snow. Only at about 2 p.m. did the companies of the first echelon reach the line of attack. People were so exhausted that they seemed unable to take a step. I was forced

to bring into battle the second echelon of the division. And only together with him did the first-echelon units go on the attack. The enemy defense in the Bor-Kostylevo sector was broken through.

To the left, the 58th rifle brigade of Colonel F.M. successfully operated. Zhiltsova, who took possession of the settlement of Yamno. Still further to the left, the right-flank formations of the 52nd Army reached the western bank of the river.

In order to develop success on the morning of January 15, Generals Klykov and Yakovlev sent the second echelons of their armies into battle, but they could not break the enemy's resistance. It took four days for the troops of the 2nd shock army to overcome 8 kilometers to the second position of the German defense, equipped along the Chudovo-Novgorod railroad and highway. For another week they trampled along the 12-kilometer line, unsuccessfully attacking the fortified points of Myasnoy Bor, Mostki and Spasskaya Polist. There were no longer enough shells, enemy aircraft dominated the air. The fighting was carried out blindly, the German positions were taken by a mass of still manpower. Here is how the former chief of staff of the battalion K.I. describes the actions of the 59th rifle brigade. Regular.

"For many hours in a row, until dark, I and my submachine gunners responded by firing at the firing of the Germans. The shooting was not aimed, since we did not see the enemy. When it got dark, they began to shoot in the direction from which the tracer bullets were flying. With the onset of darkness, fear attacked my fighters. It began to seem to them that we were surrounded, that they heard the clang of tank tracks. From excitement, many fighters shook their hands, which affected the quality of the shots ...

Soon the battle died down. I was called to the brigade headquarters. The lieutenant colonel was already drunk. He ordered me to report on the combat state of the battalion, I replied that he knew this better, since he personally led the battle, and I carried out his orders on the defense of the left flank. Obscene abuse poured on me, a pistol was pulled out of a holster and aimed at me. However, no shot was fired, and I survived.

After some time, I received an order to advance with my battalion and the detachment of heavy machine guns attached to me two kilometers ahead. No maps, no landmarks! "Go straight ahead!" And that's it! I'm already sick of my body. Tired of this drunken swearing of the commanders, their carelessness, and most importantly, the needless death of people due to the aimless conduct of the battle. And now - no combat mission. Move on and that's it! The area is unknown to anyone. Where will I lead people? Around the night, not a single sight is visible!

But an order is an order. Gathering people, I moved in the direction where I was leading

143

this shooting from machine guns. A communication wire was pulled behind me ... Suddenly, Major Startsev, the chief of staff of the brigade, himself appeared to me. Again, abusive abuse: a lieutenant colonel calls me (Two weeks later, the same major Startsev in the hospital in Borovichi will drive up in a wheelchair - he was wounded in both legs - to my bed and say: "Oh, Regular! For the way we fought, we need shoot!". He will, of course, talk about the leadership of the brigade, and not about us, who obeyed their orders.)".

Lieutenant Colonel Chernik was removed from command of the brigade immediately after the battle for Myasnaya Bor, in which he lost not only many Red Army soldiers, but also half of his own headquarters. I wonder what he taught the Chinese comrades, whom he once was an adviser to? Or, on the contrary, did they teach him how to fight like that?

After consulting with Stalin, Meretskov "for the deep development of a breakthrough" transferred 366, 382, 111 and 374 rifle, 87 cavalry divisions and 12 ski battalions to the zone of the 2nd shock army, concentrated more than 400 guns.

By this time, the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front, which had regrouped its forces and was trying to make a breakthrough in the area of the Pogostye station in the general direction of Tosno, "used up" 20 thousand soldiers, all ammunition and stopped the offensive.

While honing blitzkrieg tactics before the war, the Wehrmacht, unlike the Red Army, did not squander the experience of the First World War. The Germans showed themselves to be masters of field fortification, adapting to any terrain, skillfully choosing positions and turning them into impregnable fortresses in the shortest possible time.

Such an insurmountable obstacle for the Soviet troops was the embankment of the Kirishi-Mga railway, defended by units of the 225th and 269th infantry divisions, and the Pogostye station, the starting point for the offensive of the Fedyuninsky army. The enemy, having increased the height of the railroad track to three meters, dug rifle and machine-gun cells into the embankment, built platforms for anti-tank guns (10-12 barrels per kilometer) and dugouts for personnel, covered with rails and logs. All this was hidden from the views of Soviet observers by a camouflage fence made of branches and twigs. The approaches were heavily mined and covered with several rows of barbed wire. Key points were supported by powerful artillery groupings, self-propelled guns cruised behind the road.

In fact, Pogostye, having knocked out the defense of her infantry battalion, the 281st Rifle Division occupied another December 17, 1941. However, having found a tank of alcohol on the way, the brave warriors quickly lost their combat capability. A day later, the heroes drunk on the trolley were defeated by a hundred German submachine gunners with two tanks.

In January, the station was attacked daily by regiments of the 3rd Guards, 281st, 265th, 11th Rifle Divisions, then - 311th, 177th, 80th, 198th and 11th Rifle Divisions, 122nd and 124th Tank Brigades - unsuccessfully and with great losses. The army was bogged down in the enemy's first line of defense.

144

Separate regiments and ski battalions overcame the railway in less fortified areas, but were quickly cut off by flank attacks, and were forced to break through back. The commandant's obscenity thundered through all lines of communication, reaching the front line and the German positions: "Your mother! Forward!!! If you don't move, I'll shoot you! Yo Mama! Attack!!!!", but there was still no sense.

Hendrik Wiers, a soldier of the 1st company of the 333rd regiment of the 225th infantry division, was sitting in the railway nasyshi with his "comrades":

"As soon as dawn dawned, the Red Guards attacked in a crowd. They repeated attacks up to 8 times in 6 days. The first wave

was armed, the second wave was often unarmed, but few reached the embankment. 27th

the Red Guards attacked our position fourteen times, but did not reach it. By the end of the day, many of us had been killed, many

wounded, and our ammunition was depleted. We heard in the darkness desperate

the calls of the wounded Red Guards, who called for the orderlies. The screams continued until the morning when they were dying."

Some German machine gunners went crazy from such impressions. General Fedyuninsky writes:

"The formations and units of the army during this period fought local battles. The most active actions took place in the Pogost area, but it was successful to recognize them
it is forbidden".

At the end of January, the Sinyavinskaya task force operating as part of the 54th Army (128th, 294th, 265th rifle, 21st tank divisions, 16th tank, 6th naval brigade, 882nd artillery regiment) was transferred to the deployed in this area the 8th Army of the Leningrad Front. The army command relocated to the mainland across Lake Ladoga on January 27, Major General Alexander Vasilyevich Sukhomlin (1900-1970) was appointed commander of the army. He became the eighth army commander in eight months of the war!

On the Neva defensive line on February 1, the Neva Operational Group was re-formed under the command of General A.L. Bondarenko. In the Volkhov region, on the basis of the 3rd Guards Division, which had been withdrawn to the reserve, the formation of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps began.

The stormy activities of Meretskov and Fedyuninsky have not yet made a special impression on the German high command, judging by the notes of the chief of staff of the OKH. So, on January 19, General Halder noted that "on the front of the 18th Army, it is also as if (!) Major strikes are expected." Much more worrying was the advance of the 11th and 34th armies of the Northwestern Front to Staraya Russa and Demyansk. The commander of the Army Group "North" proposed to start an immediate withdrawal here, but Hitler categorically demanded to hold the front on the Valdai Hills.

Not having achieved unity of views with the freshly minted Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht, Field Marshal von Leeb asked for his resignation, leaving in the end: "Hitler behaves in Russia as if he were acting with

Russians at the same time. The Fuhrer, who already counted Leeba as an "incorrigible anti-fascist", accepted his resignation, and then dismissed the field marshal to the reserve. Army Group North was taken over by Colonel General Georg von Küchler, and General of Cavalry Georg von Lindemann took command of the 18th Army.

Only on January 24, the 366th Infantry Division of Colonel S.I. Bulanov captured Myasny Bor, a key position in the second line of German defense. The next day, developing an offensive along the clearing, the Siberians occupied the villages of Krechno and Novaya Kerest. Meretskov immediately decided to introduce the 13th Cavalry Corps under the command of General N.I. Gusev, consisting of two cavalry and one rifle divisions. Front Commander Directive No. 0021 stated:

"Not later than January 27, intercept the highway and the Chudovo-Leningrad railway. and take control of Luban. Don't get involved with the defense organization."

But the cavalry, barely leaving the places of concentration, were subjected to continuous attacks by German aircraft, they had to move at night, on foot in deep snow, leading the horses by rein. The corps managed to enter the breakthrough only on the morning of January 26. By the end of the day, the 87th Cavalry Division of Colonel D.M. Barinova defeated the enemy garrison in Olkhovka with a surprise attack, and the 366th Rifle on January 27 occupied Finev Lug. In five days, the corps advanced 40 km and cut the Leningrad-Novgorod railway near the Rogavka station.

However, a dashing cavalry raid on Luban did not work out. Deep snow cover did not allow off-road operations, and the corps was not attached to ski battalions. The dominance of German aviation in the complete absence of anti-aircraft weapons forced the cessation of active operations during daylight hours. There were not enough guns and mortars; the 25th Cavalry Division, Colonel V.F. Trantina, who called the "light type" division, had no artillery at all. There was no surprise factor. Strongholds had to be taken by sudden night attacks on foot. The corps was drawn into inconclusive protracted battles, losing maneuverability and mobility. The rear remained on the eastern bank of the Volkhov, and General Gusev had almost 6,000 horses, which, unlike the fighters, had to be fed anyway. Former private I.I. Kalabin reflects:

"I still wonder what the command was counting on, driving horses into an impenetrable forest, where there are no roads, no paths, and snow up to the belly of the horses? After all, it was enough to look at the topographic map of the Novgorod region to understand: these places beyond the Volkhov are the real land of Mazai - swamps and swamps ... I don't know what kind of military power they counted on.

Following the corps, the troops of the 2nd shock army and the artillery of the RGK pulled into the breakthrough. The offensive was carried out, in essence, with open flanks, since the neighboring armies were significantly behind.

In agreement with the Headquarters, it was decided to transfer all the efforts of the Volkhov Front in the direction of Spasskaya Polist and Lyuban.

The 4th Army, which had suspended the offensive, expanded its operational sector at the expense of the 59th Army, and the latter moved even further south, almost to the rear of the 2nd Shock Army. Thus, a grouping of troops of three armies was created in the direction of Spasskaya Polist: in the center, on a 15-kilometer section, the 2nd shock attack was advancing, to the right and left of it - the main forces of the 59th and 52nd armies, which had the task of expanding the gap.

The width of the breakthrough along the western bank of the Volkhov River reached 25 km, but in the area of Myasny Bor it narrowed to 3-4 km. Bloody battles unfolded in this neck. On the right flank, General Galanin, with six divisions, unsuccessfully tried to break through the enemy defenses on the 10-kilometer section of Tregubovo - Spasskaya Polist, defended by the 215th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Kneiss. For several weeks, the Köchling Brigade did not give up its positions in the village of Mostki. The losses of the 59th Army in manpower amounted to more than 16 thousand people by the end of the month.

The same situation developed on the left flank, where the 52nd Army, consisting of five divisions, after numerous attacks on the villages of Koptsy and Lyubtsy, which was held by the 126th Infantry Division of Lieutenant General Lauks, itself went on the defensive.

In the battles for the village of Koptsy, soldiers of the 225th Infantry Division, Sergeant I.S., allegedly accomplished a feat. Gerasimenko, privates A.S. Krasilov and L.A. Cheremnov, who simultaneously covered three embrasures of enemy firing points. No details of this night battle are given anywhere, except for a rather confused report from the head of the political department of the front, divisional commissar Gorokhov:

"The scouts Arsenin, Lifanov and Seleznev rushed to the first bunker and through the chimneys and doors began to destroy the Nazi garrison with grenades (A rather unusual way to conduct reconnaissance, but it is clear that a group of blockers was operating). The scouts opened fire from other, closely located bunkers. Noticing this, Gerasimenko, Cheremnov and Krasikov (he was Krasilov in the leaflet issued by the State Film Publishing House, then turned out to be Krasilov) ran up to them, threw grenades and pulled machine guns through the embrasures to use them against the enemy. At this time, the scouts were subjected to new shelling from three previously silent machine-gun points, the fire of which could disable the entire group.

Closest to these machine-gun bunkers were Sergeant Gerasimenko and his fighters Cheremnov and Krasikov. At the command of Gerasimenko, each of them rushed to one of the points, but there were no more grenades (Did everyone run out at once?), And you can't stop machine-gun fire with a rifle (It's unclear where the machine guns pulled out of the embrasures disappeared). It was impossible to hesitate, and all three at the same time came up with one solution - without any command, without saying a word, they rushed to the bunkers and closed their embrasures with their bodies. Enemy machine guns fell silent. The rest of the scouts surrounded the bunkers and blew them up. The battle continued for an hour and a half.

The scouts fought bravely and relentlessly, avenging the death of their comrades. They destroyed 55 soldiers and officers and blew up 6 bunkers (From the red fighters, judging by the story, no one else died, or died not so heroically).

Doubts are raised by the fact that not a single army of the world could do such feats, contrary to the laws of physics and human psychology. A bullet weighing 12.8 grams from an MS-34 machine gun flies out at a speed of 755 m / s, calculate the impact force yourself.

Front-line writer Viktor Astafyev, discussing with another front-line writer, Vyacheslav Kondratiev, the feat of Alexander Matrosov, said:

"He didn't rush with his chest, of course ... You know, you can't even close the embrasure with a well-fed commissar's ass" ...

In the meantime, units of the 2nd shock army went deeper and deeper into the forests and non-freezing swamps. Only forward! H. Pohlman writes:

"Oddly enough it sounds, but the outcome of the battle was decided not in the depths of the territory at the tip of the enemy's offensive wedges, which crashed far into the forests of the rear, no matter how threatening these wedges seemed on the map, but at the site of the Volkhov breakthrough and near the Novgorod highway. - Wonderful, i.e. near the settlements of Myasnoy Bor, Mostki and Spasskaya Polist. This was clearly recognized

by the command of Army Group North, which planned its countermeasures accordingly. This was also understood by the soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers, who fought here for every square meter of land with special stamina and perseverance.

The Soviet command, despite all efforts, clearly did not take the German resistance seriously enough here and relied on the effectiveness of its strike in depth instead of first advancing on both sides of the highway to the north and

South".

The troops of General Klykov (12 settlement divisions), driven by the orders of the front command, not knowing what was happening in their rear, tried to advance in a fan around the entire circumference of the territory liberated from the enemy. The density of battle formations decreased accordingly.

The 59th rifle brigade, after fierce fighting on January 28, captured Dubovik, Bolshoi and Maly Eglino. The 87th cavalry division, the 53rd and 57th brigades were drawn into multi-day battles for the village of Ruchi, 25 km from Lyuban.

Progress was largely dictated by the conditions of the terrain and the stubbornness of the enemy. Soviet formations were successful, advancing to the west and northwest, where there was almost no enemy and where they had to fight mainly with nature.

But it was worth turning east, towards Lyuban and the railway

lines to Leningrad, the achievements were insignificant. Having received a rebuff, the troops of the Red Army bypassed the settlements from the west, again delving into the snow-covered wilds, sometimes they simply wandered through the forests, not knowing their tasks, having no information about either their own or the German units.

Head of the Political Directorate of the Volkhov Front, Divisional Commissar

148

Gorokhov reported:

"So, in the 53rd Rifle Brigade, not only the Red Army soldiers, but also the commanders did not know the combat mission, did not know the settlements that were being attacked."

Under. Yamno, three rifle brigades at once, briskly marching in column formation without reconnaissance and without combat guards, in full confidence that everything around was "already ours", fell into a fire bag organized by the Germans.

As a result of the "Brownian movement" of a huge number of formations, units, separate subunits and logistics agencies, with the state of communication characteristic of the Red Army of that period, the army headquarters was less and less in control of the process. By the way, back in 1929, Stalin explained to the instructors of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks:

"With a wholesale advance ... the offensive must inevitably fizzle out and fail. Indiscriminate advance is death for the offensive.

But, having become the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, he forgot what he taught, apparently believed that war was a simpler matter than collectivization. And who would dare to fix it?

The lack of food in the units was made up for by horsemeat: almost all artillery and equipment were horse-drawn, and the losses of horses, which, due to lack of fodder, were fed with birch branches, were horrendous. One veteran figuratively said that "the horses died like flies." Not only the 2nd Shock Army, which had gone into the breach, was sitting on a starvation ration, but the neighbors who were standing still were sitting, the entire Volkhov Front was sitting. The restless Gorokhov, having checked the condition of the 4th and 52nd armies, sounded the alarm:

"In the armies there are absolutely no shag, sugar, crackers, meat, concentrates, flour. At 65 sd, food is cooked from one cereal, dispensed at half the rate. Not in 80 cd salt.

The situation with fodder has worsened, oats are running out, hay has been used up, the horse stock is severely depleted. In the 60th artillery regiment, 124 horses, due to exhaustion, cannot transport materiel.

The losses of the Volkhov Front in January amounted to 73 thousand people, but at the same time, due to new replenishments, the number of troops and equipment did not decrease, but

artillery increased by one and a half times. On February 1, there were 25 divisions, 9 brigades, 36 separate battalions - more than 233 thousand people, 3196 guns and mortars, 171 tanks. The air forces of the front already had 313 combat aircraft. Army aviation commanders usually "forget" when calculating, but home front workers have their own pride, and they reported that the Army Air Forces received an additional 188 aircraft.

In the memoirs of Soviet generals, written on the basis of the victorious and heroic reports of the Sovinformburo and their own false reports, it is invariably stated that the battles took place with "great losses for both sides." This is impossible purely theoretically, given that the "armed to the teeth" Germans firmly defended themselves in prepared positions "in strong defensive

149

structures", and the Soviet soldiers attacked them in an open field "without sufficient fire support". So, the former "Guards mortar" N.I. Isakov recalls:

"How long I was in Myasny Bor, I didn't see the earth, everywhere the corpses of our soldiers. I saw the killed German only once, everyone went to look at him, as if he were a curiosity.

And how could it be otherwise, if at the head of the armies were "generals" such as General Ivanov, to whom the commander of the front was forced to send such telegrams:

"I categorically forbid you to carry out bayonet attacks practiced by you against heavily fortified enemy positions without preliminary fire preparation and serious support for the attack with mortar and artillery fire."

Well, according to Meretskov, it was possible to go with hostility with "security". Marching replenishment went on and on, Russia is big. When rifles were in short supply, recruits were given sticks with attached bayonets. A well-known case: a bullet is a fool, a bayonet is well done!

The wounded during the battle were not carried out, no one provided primary assistance to them, because, contrary to all charters and common sense, the "fathers-commanders" put orderlies and medical instructors in the rifle chain on a par with ordinary soldiers. For this reason, first of all, a huge shortage of junior medical staff quickly arose in the 4th Army. In the end, Meretskov, at the risk of causing discontent with the Stavka, was forced by his order to remove Ivanov from his post and appoint Major General I.I. Lyapin. Stalin nevertheless expressed dissatisfaction with the excess of authority, but nevertheless approved the decision of the front commander.

The 55th Army of the Leningrad Front with six divisions (268, 43, 56, 70, 90, 125th), with the support of the 124th and 125th tank brigades and the 86th separate tank battalion, waged offensive battles at the mouth of the river all winter Tosna and in the anti-tank ditch, as well as south of Kolpino for the villages of Putrolovo and Yam-Izhora.

Recalls Colonel V.K. Zinoviev from the headquarters of the 125th Infantry Division:

"The Military Council of the 55th Army set us the task of capturing Krasny Bor. I think that the division could fulfill the order and take Krasny Bor. The anti-tank ditch was already in our hands. And this was a convenient line for the concentration of troops and the offensive. It might have been expected that the neighboring divisions would be ordered to make it easier for us to carry out the task of capturing Krasny Bor by offensive operations in order to cover our flanks. But the neighboring divisions did not receive such an order, and we advanced with open flanks.

Having rushed to the attack, our units moved forward, but fell under the crossfire of the enemy and were forced to lie down on the frozen ground, which cannot be gnawed out, neither with a entrenching shovel, nor with teeth. Especially big sweats

150

ri suffered the 657th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel Varyukhin. The regiment advanced in the first echelon and lost so many fighters and commanders that it became unfit for combat. This was reported by the regiment commander to the divisional commander, Major General Fadeev Ivan Ivanovich.

- Repeat what you said! exclaimed the general. And I became alert, listening to their conversation.

"There are thirteen active bayonets and one heavy machine gun left in the regiment," said a voice in the receiver, which the general brought close to my ear.

- It can't be! exclaimed the general again...

Throughout January and February of the forty-second year, units of the division fought, which in the reports of the Sovinformburo were called battles of local importance. We advanced almost to Krasny Bor. But this not only did not improve, but even worsened our situation, because parts of the neighboring divisions still remained in place. And the regiments and battalions of our division, which had moved forward, now had to repel enemy attacks not only from the front, but also from the flanks, because we ourselves, or rather, by order of the army command, climbed into the bag At the same time, there were losses in people big ones."

Attempts to take Krasny Bor were also made in March. As a result, the former army commander, General V.P. Sviridov concluded:

"The Krasnobor operation once again convinced us 8 that an offensive in one direction with limited forces, with the other sectors of the front inactive, only succeeds on the first 6 days, when the advantage of surprise and superiority of forces are still in our hands."

Whether it was worth "convincing" again and again in elementary things is undeniable

proven during the First World War? How many fighters died during the continuous assault on Krasny Bor - only God knows.

Active operations at the same time were deployed by units of the 13th, 21st and 189th rifle divisions of the 42nd army on the outskirts of the strongholds of Upper Koyrovo, Kiskino, Tuypolovo, Sind, Veneryazi, achieving nothing territorially, but, of course, "destroying many enemy soldiers and officers.

In early February, the army of General Klykov finally got bogged down in forests and swamps, and Galanin's 59th army came close to Spasskaya Polista only in the middle of the month, but could not take it. Meretskov writes:

"I will never forget the name of this village, near which fierce battles were in full swing for half a year. The neck of the breakthrough expanded, I remember, to 13 kilometers ... But this was where our success in expanding the breakthrough ended. Despite persistent attacks, the troops failed to push the breakthrough even a meter. Sometimes even defensive battles had to be fought.

151

It became clearer and clearer that it would not be possible to reach Kingisepp and encircle the 18th German Army. At the same time, the marshal refers to the power of the German defense and hints at some six divisions "transferred from France, Denmark, Yugoslavia and Greece itself", which replenished the Army Group North. It is very possible, but these divisions could not interfere with Meretskov in any way. Moreover, when it became clear that the offensive of the Volkhov Front had run out of steam, the Germans withdrew their formations from here and transferred them to the south.

The fact is that at that time a critical situation developed south of Lake Ilmen, in the zone of the 16th German Army, where the troops of the North-Western Front under the command of Lieutenant General P.A. Kurochkin, surrounded by six divisions of the 2nd Corps of General Walther von Brokdorff-Allefeldt, organized the Demyansk cauldron. German divisions arriving from Europe were supposed to close the gap formed at the junction of the two army groups. In addition, in order to unblock the Demyansk group, on February 13, the Fuhrer's headquarters decided to form a strike group under the command of General Seydlitz-Kuribakh in the Staraya Russa area. It included, in particular, the 122nd Infantry and 18th Motorized Divisions, removed from the Leningrad and Volkhov directions.

Telegrams and calls were sent from Moscow to the headquarters of the Volkhov Front with demands to intensify offensive operations, accusations of indecision and inaction. Meretskov, in turn, complained about the lack of tanks, shells, aviation, the fatigue of the troops and the poor quality of the incoming reinforcements, but at the end of the negotiations he invariably answered one thing: "It will be done!"

Stalin turned out to be a hostage of the system he created. Everyone was eager to be the first to report on the capture of the most vulgar village, which in the reports turned into a powerful knot of enemy resistance, and no one dared to upset the Leader with bad news. The congenital defect of the system was, in army jargon, the ubiquitous "blindness" from top to bottom, simply - eyewitness.

For example, General Katyshkin reports that, in fulfilling the task of expanding the breach made in the German defenses, the 59th Army "very soon became involved in a period of intense and protracted battles." True, he himself was not present at the same time, therefore he emphasizes that "naturally, I drew data from documents," that is, from operational reports.

Let's look at those documents where the general could not look. The head of the Special Department of the NKVD of the Volkhov Front, State Security Major Melnikov, in a memorandum addressed to Comrade Malenkov, a member of the GKO, "signaled" about the situation in the army of General Galanin:

"The command of the 59th Army, knowing that the 377th, 372nd, 374th and 378th rifle divisions are not conducting active operations and are actually occupying the defense, in the operational reports of the headquarters, the actions of these divisions are noted as "actively pinning down the enemy" and "conducting combat reconnaissance". The inactivity of these divisions is also referred to in the operational reports as "repelling enemy counterattacks", not ashamed to report that the divisions are repulsing the counterattack of one enemy platoon.

152

Of the most typical examples of eyewash, we cite the following: the 1269th rifle regiment of the 382nd rifle division occupies the front line for 18 kilometers, does not conduct active operations, takes up defense. Shtarm writes that the regiment is actively holding down the enemy. The 377th Rifle Division occupies a front of 13 kilometers, does not conduct active operations, occupies

defense.

Shtarm writes in the operational summary that "the 377th division is conducting active combat reconnaissance." In fact, 2-3 people are sent for reconnaissance. Units of the 372nd Rifle Division occupy a 4-kilometer front, they are not conducting active operations, they are defending. In the operational summary of the army, it is reported that "units of the 372nd division are blocking the enemy" ...

Recently, in parts of the 59th Army, cases of moral decay have become more frequent on the part of individual servicemen. Often, using their official position, the commanders incline the female staff to sexual debauchery, but here, in the presence of outsiders, they decide battle halls. Individual commanders and commissars of units, being carried away by women, systematically get drunk. During combat operations, instead of organizing a battle, they sit out in dugouts ...

The commander of the 1249th Infantry Regiment of the 377th Infantry Division, Major Shvagirev, systematically gets drunk with his assistant in the household department, Savichev. On February 19, Shvagirev, being in a state of intoxication, scolded political instructor Nosov with swear words and hit him in the face three times. Shvagirev, in a drunken state, gathered the entire command staff of the regiment, with whose forces he ordered to take the enemy's bunker ...

The commander of the 378th Rifle Division, Colonel Dorofeev, and the commissar of the division, Kornyshev, systematically drink and cohabit with women. Having drunk Buluchi, Dorofeev declared to the commanders: "The women here are prostitutes, and you, commanders, do not waste this opportunity" ...

On February 5, during the offensive of the division, the chief of staff and the commissar of the division left for the command post. Dorofeev, however, summoned the girl of the military assistant to his dugout and drank with her for four days. He motivated his failure to leave the command post due to illness.

The command staff in conversations among themselves says: "Well, how is our drunken command, what did you decide?" ... At the time of the combat mission, parts of the division to capture the village of Ostrov Dorofeev, Kornyshev and chief of staff Axelrod drank for three days without leaving from dugouts.

Such facts of moral decay in parts of the 59th Army are not isolated. According to our information, the commanders and commissars of units and formations do not take measures to eliminate such phenomena, since they themselves are the culprits of this. The Military Council of the Army has been repeatedly informed about the facts of the moral decay of individual commanders and political workers of units of the 59th Army. However, he did not take measures to curb the outrages.

153

Of course, such behavior of the authorities demoralized and corrupted the subordinates. But, on the other hand, it seems that it would be better if these "Dorofeevs" and "Shvagirevs" did not crawl out of their dugouts at all. Because when they, drunk, undertook to "organize the battle", it turned out even worse (a month later, Colonel I.P. Dorofeev was covered by a stray shell and he got into the calendar of the 59th Army as a commander who "did not waste his life in the name of victory over enemy, for the cause of the Party, for the Motherland").

On February 17, Marshal Voroshilov, a representative of the Headquarters, arrived at the front. He handed over an order demanding by any means to reach the Lyuban-Chudovo railway before the beginning of March. Then the marshal, as usual, climbed to the front line, forcing all the escorts and security officers to pour cold sweat.

The pictures of Voroshilov's visits are described in many memoirs and always look the same: accompanied by the next divisional commander, the marshal got under fire to the positions of the advanced battalion. There, in front of the enemy, without bowing to the bullets and clearly saluting, he blew out a report on the situation, after which he talked paternally with soldiers and made appeals.

Here, for example, is what P.K. Koshevoy, commander of the 65th Rifle Division that fought near Myasny Bor:

"That's good," said the marshal, having heard that the division had successfully completed its combat missions. - And now we will go to any battalion to the front line.

Meretskov and Yakovlev began to give me signs that could mean only one thing: in no case should you bring a representative of the Headquarters to the front line.

"I can't, Comrade Marshal. Highway and railroad are targeted by the enemy. There, whenever people appear, artillery strikes and there is dense machine-gun fire. Are you afraid?" asked K.E. Voroshilov. - And I considered you a man of a tense intimidation. Go-go.

We went to the forefront together. The marshal ordered everyone else to stay at my command post... The marshal was interested in everything and was by no means going to hide from the bullets that kept whistling next to us and plowed the snow...

I got very hot then from K.A. Meretskov for a long stay with K.E. Voroshilov at the forefront. The marshal himself was extremely pleased and left the division in excellent spirits.

It is not known what the "first red commander" saw from the advanced trenches. In any case, he did not see the impending military catastrophe (although on the Western and Kalinin fronts, reckless breakthroughs in narrow areas have already led to the encirclement of the 29th Army of General Shvetsov and the 33rd Army of General Efremov). So in an excellent mood, he drove off to Moscow.

154

Based on the experience of the Tikhvin operation, temporary operational groups were created by order of the front commander. The formations of the 2nd shock army, which formed a front facing east, were united in the group of Major General P.F. Privalov (191, 382 rifle divisions, 57 rifle brigade).

Zhiltsov's task force (23rd, 25th, 58th rifle brigades) was supposed to provide the left flank of the army and intercept the Leningrad-Novgorod railway. Korovnikov's group (327th, 374.111th rifle divisions and 22nd rifle brigade) was advancing on Finev Lug. The 4th Guards Division and the 59th Rifle Brigade, operating in the direction of Sennaya Kerest, made up the group of General A.I. Andreeva.

A task force appeared in the 59th Army under the command of Major General P.F. Alferyev, who was made personally responsible for the capture of Spasskaya Polista. Near this village, a "carousel" of Soviet formations was spinning non-stop, alternately thrown into the assault - the 327th rifle division, the 59th, 57th, 22nd separate brigades, 111, 92nd, 382nd 372nd, 374th, 2nd division ...

Recalls the former platoon commander from the 382nd division I.D. Nikonov.

"The offensive usually lasted four days. At night they crawled, checked how many were left alive. You crawl, move - alive or not? It happened that a person did not

killed, and dead: frozen. Frosts in January reached to 40 degrees. On the days of the onset of food, we did not receive. When the offensive stopped, those who remained were taken to their original positions and fed there. People made fires and warmed themselves, fell asleep, often setting fire to clothes and felt boots. I had to crawl to the front line and take off the dead - there is nowhere to get a new one. Everything was lacking: food, fodder, ammunition. Cartridges were issued one or two clips, they were also mined from the dead ...

In front of the German positions, everything was pitted with shells and strewn with the corpses of our soldiers, the wounded tried to crawl over the corpses and also died or froze. We didn't have any trenches or even cells. They climbed into the craters and hid behind the corpses...

Fighting near Leningrad 8 in the first half of 1942

They began to find out how many boys each had. There were five in one regiment, six in another, and seven in ours. In total, 35 bayonets remained at the forefront. But the order is the same

attack! In the morning they came again. By noon, it was left: you and I, and we are with you ... Nobody removed the corpses from the front line, they just decayed, fallen without a trace ... "...

Some regiments were sent for reorganization, instead of them new ones were put into action. The attack was launched every day, month after month, but they failed to take Spasskaya Polist.

The command of the German Army Group North also practiced the creation of battle groups in separate areas. Only Meretskov did this in order to somehow manage the masses of troops who had sunk into the "jungle" and delegate responsibility, and the German generals - due to the scarcity of reserves.

155

Separate headquarters, battalions and batteries, removed from calm sectors of the front, were reduced to the composition of improvised formations with a variable composition. Guards and rear services, repair, construction and security units, even vacationers unloaded from trains, were thrown to "darn holes" in the defense.

So, after the Soviet breakthrough near Myasny Bor, on the right flank of the 38th Army Corps, the Yashke battle group was formed on the basis of the 20th Motorized Division and other units. In the Luga area, having subordinated all formations to the commander of the 285th guard division, the command of the 18th Army created a battle group of General von Polo.

Units of the 225th Infantry Division, which had arrived from France as early as the beginning of December and so frightened Meretskov, formed the von Basse group, which occupied the Eglino-Krasnaya Gorka line. Suddenly transplanted from the soil of sunny Wignacourt in

the Volkhov forests ringing with frost in the middle of January, in light overcoats, unprepared tactically and psychologically, this division suffered heavy losses, mainly from frostbite.

One of the veterans of the division complained to our veteran after the war that he was given only eight hours a day for heating - two hours in position, an hour for rest,

And

how little heat there was in German wooden bunkers with an iron stove. Ours, who spent the night in the snow and did not always have the opportunity to make a fire, he was simply

Didn't understand.

But in general, the German General Staff assessed the Soviet successes on the Volkhov as tactical and not inspiring serious concern. The main thing is that the 215th and 126th Infantry Divisions, with reinforcements arriving to them, firmly held the flanks of the breakthrough, preventing the German defenses from collapsing along the Volkhov.

On February 23, in units, batteries, squadrons, a festive order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR was read out:

"The initiative is now in our hands, and the efforts of Hitler's loose, rusty machine cannot hold back the onslaught of the Red Army. The day is not far off when the Red Army, with its mighty blow, will throw back the brutal enemies from Leningrad, clear the cities and villages of Belarus and Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia, Estonia and Karelia from them, liberate the Soviet Crimea, and red banners will again fly victoriously on all Soviet soil. .

156

Chapter 8, LUBA OPERATION

(February - July 1942)

The result of the Voroshilov inspection was a new directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of February 26, 1942. It clarified the tasks of the 2nd shock and 54th armies. Both armies were now to advance towards each other and unite at Lyuban no later than March 5th. From that moment on, the strategic operation to defeat Army Group North passed into the category of an independent front-line operation and became known as Lyuban. And the task has now become more modest - to surround and destroy the 1st Army Corps of General von Both. General M.S. Khozin writes:

"This directive meant, in essence, the refusal of the Stavka from its original plan. Realizing that neither the forces nor the means were enough to carry it out, the Stavka proposed to sequentially defeat the Lyuban-Chudovskaya, and then the Mginsky group. If this decision had been made at the beginning, that is, during the organization of the operation, perhaps its outcome would have been different."

For air support of the operation, eight aviation regiments of the RVGK, long-range bomber aviation and the air force of the fronts were involved.

A few days earlier, Hitler once again pointed out the meaning of Leningrad to the commander of Army Group North: "Not a meter back! The most important thing is to keep Leningrad in the blockade ring. The areas of responsibility of the 18th and 16th armies were redistributed. General Lindemann took over the entire front to Lake Ilmen, concentrating in his hands the leadership of the Battle of Volkhov.

General Meretskov, following the instructions of the Headquarters, demanded the speedy exit of the 2nd shock units on the Moscow-Leningrad railway. In response, Klykov reported:

"Enemy aircraft dominate the air all the time and paralyze the actions of the troops. The road network is in poor condition... The supply of fodder, food, fuel and ammunition is far from meeting the existing needs. To develop a

successful offensive, the army needs three fresh divisions, a rocket launcher division, at least two motor battalions, at least three road-building battalions, at least fifteen fuel trucks, hay, replenish the horse train and cover the army from the air.

For a breakthrough to Lyuban, the 80th Cavalry Division of Colonel L.A. was transferred to the 13th Cavalry Corps from the 4th Army. Slanov, and from the reserve of the front - the replenished 327th rifle. These units were ordered "on the move" to seize Krasnaya Gorka and go to Lyuban. Behind them, developing success, the 46th rifle division of General A.K. was to enter the breakthrough. Okulich and the 22nd Infantry Brigade of Colonel F.K. Pugachev. The capture of the "settlement" Krasnaya Gorka, which was a forester's farm on the edge of the swamp,

157

the heavily fortified embankment of the Chudovo-Weinmarn railway prevented. And she still had to get there. Here is what V.T. Dmitriev.

"The path ran through forests and swamps, devoid of any roads. We moved only by compass. Ahead, topographers plotted the route. Deep snow, under it - non-freezing swamps. Gaubipa weighing 2400 kg sank on both wheels at once. The horses were exhausted. People - firefighters and managers - put on straps and

together, with the help of improvised materials, dragged guns on themselves through the swamps. The speed of advance was determined by meters, and yet we tried to keep up with the infantry. On the whole route of the march, there were a lot of dead horses - a trace left by the cavalry corps. The picture is terrible. All daylight hours - German air raids. True, the bombs, falling into the swamp, exploded at great depths, and direct hits happened rarely.

The forward detachment formed by General Gusev, consisting of the 80th Cavalry Division and the 1100th Infantry Regiment with two companies of tanks, broke through the embankment on February 26, but the main forces, which fell under the strongest attacks from the air and suffered heavy losses in the horse composition, could not do this. managed. The next morning, the enemy closed the gap and restored the broken defense sector at Krasnaya Gorka. For ten days, Slanov's group fought in encirclement, not

receiving ammunition, food, having no connection. On the night of March 8-9, having destroyed all military equipment and heavy weapons, the colonel fought back with the remnants of the detachment (for example, only 18 people left the 1100th regiment) and was immediately removed from his post for "unauthorized withdrawal, lethargic and indecisive action."

All further attacks towards Lyuban were successfully repelled by the enemy. On March 8, the combat log of the 18th Army reported 1,093 captured and 1,556 Russians killed near Krasnaya Gorka. Shortly thereafter, the 13th Cavalry Corps was withdrawn to the rear.

The Pomeranian operation, entrusted to the 191st Infantry Division with the aim of reaching the Moscow Railway, 5 km southeast of Lyuban, turned out to be just as unsuccessful. The division was ordered to make a covert march through the forests without artillery and convoys, capture the Pomeranian station with a night attack and, having organized all-round defense, hold out until help approaches. Divisional Commander Colonel A.I. Starunin tried to prove to the commander of the task force, General P.F. Privalov, the impossibility of carrying out an operation without a single weapon, having 30-50 riflemen in companies, with a supply of food 5 crackers per soldier, ammunition 5-7 rounds per rifle and one disc for machine guns and machine guns. But these arguments did not work on Privalov. Former commander of the commandant's company I.S. Osipov testifies:

"Commissar Alekseev ended the conversation, something like this: "Well, we will drink, but the Motherland will ask you for the consequences and death."

On the night of February 21, the regiments managed to seep through the German positions. However, in the area of the Pomeranie station, when leaving the forest, the column of the 191st Infantry Division was discovered by enemy air reconnaissance, after which it was subjected to a sudden artillery raid. As a result, the only

158

walkie-talkie and the only radio operator died, German machine guns completed the job

The demoralized regiments took refuge in the forest, there was no turning back. Recalls I.S. Osipov:

"The failures, the losses suffered, hunger and cold greatly undermined the morale of not only the fighters, but also the commanders. Endless, aimless wandering through the forests completely exhausted the physical and moral strength of people. We have lost combat capability."

After the ammunition and food ran out, and it was not possible to establish contact with any of his own, Colonel Starunin decided to curtail the "operation". He ordered the regimental commanders to break the units into small groups and leave the encirclement. Only one regiment and the commandant's company managed to escape. The fate of the division headquarters is unknown. The new headquarters was recruited by a new divisional commander, the former collective farm foreman, Colonel Korkin, who was already familiar to us.

In February, the Volkhov Front lost another 53 thousand people killed and wounded, Leningrad - 51 thousand, North-Western in the battles for Demyansk and Staraya Russa - 50 thousand. The loss of personnel in the German Army Group North amounted to 38.5 thousand soldiers and officers.

At the beginning of March 1942, units of the 2nd Shock Army advanced 75 km to the west, reaching the Rogavka railway station, and 40 km to the north, 6 km short of Liuban. The front of the army stretched for 200 km. The order to advance further and further, regardless of the flanks, led to the formation of the Luban "bottle" - an area of 3 thousand square kilometers with a narrow neck at the breakthrough site.

This four-kilometer corridor from the village of Myasnoy Bor to the village of Krechno, which the Germans were constantly trying to cut, and the Russians to expand with the forces of the 52nd and 59th armies, was the only communication supplying the advancing units.

On March 1, the enemy began to transfer forces to the base of the neck of the breakthrough. Again, these were not divisions from Denmark or "Greece itself". Von Küchler withdrew troops from near Leningrad: leaving positions in the Uritsk region, the 58th Infantry Division of General Friedrich Altrichter was concentrated south of the Soviet breakthrough, on the northern flank - the SS police division of General Wünnenberg, removed from the Pulkovo direction.

At a meeting held on March 2 at Hitler's headquarters, von Küchler reported on a plan for the destruction of Soviet troops. After the meeting, General Halder wrote in his diary:

"Decision: go on the offensive on the Volkhov ... The Fuhrer demands a few days before the start of the offensive to carry out aviation training (bombing of warehouses and troops in the forests with super-heavy caliber bombs). Having completed the breakthrough on the Volkhov, one should not waste energy on destroying the enemy. If we

159

let's throw him into the swamps, this will doom him to death.

The 54th Army stormed Pogostya all winter. For a new offensive, new divisions and marching reinforcements arrived, a strike force was created from 12 calculated divisions and 200 tanks. The headquarters reinforced the army with the 4th Guards Rifle Corps (a rifle division, 4 rifle and 1 tank brigade, 3 ski battalions, a rocket artillery division). The task remained the same: to advance in the general direction of Lyuban.

The operation began on 28 February. Soviet formations, regardless of losses, step by step, incredibly slowly, but still began to gnaw through the German defenses towards the 2nd shock army. The battle here was fierce. Finally, we managed to take Pogostye and advance 12-15 km beyond the line of the railway

roads. Recalls a former soldier of the 311th Infantry Division N.N. Nikulin:

"The battles for the Pogostye station continued for several months. In the morning, the divisions went to storm the railway LINE, STRONGLY fortified by the Germans, and fell, struck down by machine-gun bursts. Replenishment arrived in the evening. The next morning they again went on the attack and again fell, mowed down by German machine guns. This went on day after day.

Heavy snowfalls covered the battlefield. When the snow melted in the spring, stacks of the dead were discovered. Near the ground lay soldiers in summer uniforms, in tunics and boots. They were piled high with Marines in pea coats and wide black bell-bottoms. Above - Siberians in sheepskin coats and felt boots, who went on the attack in January - February 1942. Even higher are the "political fighters" in padded jackets and rag hats issued in besieged Leningrad. On them are bodies in overcoats and camouflage coats, with and without helmets on their heads. The dead of many divisions mixed up here ...

I saw many dead people before and after that, but the spectacle of Pogost'e in the spring of 1942 was the only one of its kind! As a symbol of a fierce struggle, a sailor from the Marine Corps towered over the snow-covered field, struck down at the moment of the throw by the fans. He froze in a tense position. The brass buttons on the black pea jacket sparkled in the sun. There was also an infantryman, who, already wounded, began to bandage his leg and froze, struck down by a new bullet. The bandage in his hands fluttered in the wind all winter ... This terrible sight was forever imprinted in my memory. In the subconscious even stronger: I acquired an unchanging, constantly repeating dream - a pile of dead bodies near the railway ...

Still, they took the guest. First the station, then the village, or rather the place where all this once was. A division of Vyatka peasants came, short, bow-legged, sinewy, with high cheekbones. - "Oh, your mother! Was not!" - they climbed onto the German bunkers, smoked out the Fritz, blew everything up and advanced five hundred meters. It was just what was needed. A rifle corps was thrown into the gap over their bodies, and the army moved forward. And again, German reinforcements stood in her way. And the Headquarters drove all new divisions into attacks doomed to failure. The directive of the Great Leader of All Nations and the Wise Commander was carried out, ordering to defeat Germany in 1942.

160

A tactic that is quite worthy of being called the "three-row Fedyuninsky", where is the battle-talist Vereshchagin with his "Apotheosis of War".

By mid-March, the 54th Army managed to advance another 15 km, as the commander modestly noted, "at the cost of great efforts." The combat journal of the army lists the composition of the 11th rifle division on March 13: junior command staff courses - 54 people, barrage detachment - 51, mortar division - 25, 320th rifle regiment - 57, 163rd regiment - 112, 219- 1st regiment - 27 people. A total of 326 "active bayonets", along with a detachment, which had a slightly different specialization than the fight against enemy firing points.

However, it seemed to the Soviet generals that the long-awaited breakthrough had already taken place. It was on this day that Khozin, who was at the headquarters of Fedyuninsky, discussed plans

further actions with Zhdanov and Kuznetsov, who demanded an early "turn on Tosno". He confidently promised to lift the blockade of Leningrad before the onset of the spring thaw:

- a) exit to Lyuban - 4-5 days - 19-20.03;
- 6) regrouping of troops - dvalnya - 21-22.08;
- c) the beginning of the offensive in the Tosnensky direction - 23.03;
- D) exit to the Tosno area - 27-28.03. With comradely greetings KHOZIN.

The situation in the Pogostye region began to disturb the German command, which at that time was regrouping forces to carry out an operation to "cork" the Luban "bottle". The connection of parts of Klykov and Fedyuninsky, which were separated by 30 km, threatened to encircle six German divisions at once. During the second half of the month, the name of the Russian village of Pogostye was mentioned eleven times in the diary of General Halder. But everything worked out: the 269th Infantry Division held out. Then reinforcements arrived in time, and the Germans stabilized the situation by well-thought-out counterattacks by March 30. After 20 years, General Fedyuninsky admitted in his memoirs:

"The worst thing for me was near Pogost in the winter of one thousand nine hundred and forty-two. Four months of grueling, bloody, and most importantly, unsuccessful battles in the wooded and swampy region between Mgoi and Tikhvin left me forever with heavy memories".

In March, the 54th Army suffered the greatest losses (43,000 soldiers), failing to complete its task, but recapturing 400 square kilometers of swampy forest and two villages from the enemy - Zenino and Konduyu. The front of the army that was in the "bag" ran along the line: the Dubok stream northwest of Pogost - the villages of Venyagolovo - Makaryevskaya deserts - Smerdynia - Korodinya - Lipovik - Dubovik and further by rail. It was not possible to take these villages, despite numerous attempts.

The 59th Army, fulfilling the directive of the front to intercept the highway and the Chudovo-Novgorod railway north of Spasskaya Polist, tried with counter strikes

161

The 378th and 111th rifle divisions from the west and the 377th and 92nd divisions from the east cut off the German "finger" - a narrow strip of positions that can be fired through, not exceeding 3-4 kilometers in width, stretching from Tregubovo to Mostki.

On March 14, the 2nd shock army recaptured Krasnaya Gorka, and this was the last success of the Red Army. Fascinated by the organization of "breakthroughs" and "defeats", its command did not notice that the enemy was preparing an adequate response.

On March 15, the Germans, having completed the concentration of shock fists, with the support of aviation of the 1st Air Fleet, launched Operation Raubtir and by the end of March 18

counter strikes from the north and south blocked the neck four kilometers west of Myasny Bor, cutting off the communications of the 2nd shock army. Now its connection with the supply bases was carried out only by air - light aircraft U-2 biplanes. The united units of the Wehrmacht formed the Wünnenberg battle group and immediately set about creating a cut-off position along the Polist and Glushitsa rivers.

Unpleasantly struck by these events, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief ordered Meretskov to go to the troops and personally organize a breakthrough, and at the same time "completely defeat and destroy the counter-advancing units of the enemy." Fierce fighting began to restore the corridor. This is what the former commander of the 376th Rifle Division hastily transferred from the 4th Army, Lieutenant General G.P. Isakov:

"For 10 days, the division repulsed counterattacks of superior enemy forces. The fight for the neck was not for life, but for death. I was then a young commander and, frankly, there were such critical moments when it seemed that the limit had come - swamps, water, cold, continuous raids by dive bombers and flurries of machine-gun and artillery fire on a crowded patch, as if on a patch, not covered by anything from the air. grouping; everywhere there is a mass of unburied corpses, both of our own and of the enemy, - all this fell on the shoulders of those who were responsible for the fulfillment of the task and stood to the death.

Having thrown into battle five rifle divisions, the 7th Guards Tank Brigade, two rifle brigades and all the units at hand, up to the courses of junior lieutenants and the training company of junior commanders, Meretskov partially complied with Stalin's order. He reported on March 29 that "the units of the enemy, straddling the road, were thrown back in the northern and southern directions."

The next day, continuing to please the Kremlin with peppy reports, the Military Council of the front reported that "the liquidation of the enemy, who had broken through at the junction of the 52nd and 59th armies, was developing successfully", and that on the morning of April 2, the 2nd shock and mortar barrels and two heavy guards jet regiments will resume a decisive attack on Lyuban. At the same time they promised to liberate Novgorod soon.

In fact, the "road" cleared of the Germans was a narrow strip of forest and muddy swamps, through which only

162

small groups of fighters and carts, mostly at night. The participants in the battle believe that until May 30, 1942, the day when "the neck slammed shut tightly," the Germans blocked it at least six times. General I.T. Korovnikov recalled:

"The corridor seemed to pulsate, now narrowing, then expanding. But in diameter it was no longer 11-14 kilometers,

and only two and a half - two, sometimes shrinking to several hundred meters.

Aimed fire was increasingly replaced by point-blank shots. Hand-to-hand fights often ensued.

The path that ran north of Myasny Bor was called by the Red Army "Devil's Bridge", and the wetland between the rivers Polista and Glushitsa - "Valley of Death". Lines of porters stretched along the isthmus, which was being shot through, delivering shells and crackers. It was them that Meretskov had in mind, reporting that transports with food, fodder and ammunition again went to the 2nd shock army.

The German "Soldaten", sitting in the "sleeve" of the cut-off position, put a calligraphic sign at the entrance: "Here begins the ass of the world."

Where the waves of the Volkhov grunt day and night Where the Stalinist organ plays music for us, Where the fragments whistle all night long, This is our native place - the ass of the world.

By the way, while Meretskov "successfully eliminated" the enemy near Myasny Bor, on March 24, west of the village of Glushitsy, the Germans surrounded the 378th Infantry Division, which, after the death of Dorofeev, was led by Colonel G. I. Lilenkov, and a regiment of the 111th division (renamed by that time into the 19th Guards). The Soviet units took up all-round defense in a forest area measuring 1.5 by 2 kilometers, suffering huge losses from ferocious bombing and continuous shelling, and in moments of calm, "political workers, leaders of party organizations, held conversations with the soldiers." They stayed in this position for exactly a month, until the survivors "with the permission of the command", having overcome 8 kilometers through the swamps, reached the Olkhovsky farms.

The Red Army soldiers of the 2nd Shock Army stood to death on the borders of the Luban "bottle", defending "a vast wooded and swampy area liberated from the Nazis" (!), Where there were no roads, no cities, no strategic objects. The losses of the Volkhov Front in March amounted to 40,679 people.

The "decisive offensive" promised by Meretskov bogged down almost immediately. According to the reports of inspectors from higher headquarters and political departments, it can be concluded that the troops on the front line, exhausted by heavy fighting, malnutrition, cold, disorganized, abandoned by their own command, only pretended to be active:

163

"I checked the readiness of units of the 330th rifle division, including up to the battalion, and found: the 92nd regiment was late by more than 1.5 hours, because at 8.00 people began to be fed breakfast; at 46
cn

the battalion of the first echelon received the task of clearing the forest, did not orient itself and began to advance on the command post of the division (!). In 259, the companies and battalions did not know the task well, and when taking up their starting position in one of the companies, the machine guns were installed in our direction. In addition, in 259 cn the artillery fire was planned on its own, and the infantry advanced on its own. The offensive front of each division is 200–500 m.

most commanders from division to battalion sit in dugouts, with the exception of 259 joint ventures.

Front and army artillerymen waged their own war. They didn't know where the enemy was and didn't want to know, they just fired at the sound or "in that direction", at the heads of the "Hans" or "Ivans" - as God wills, throwing hundreds of tons of precious shells in vain and constantly complaining about the lack of ammunition. The pilots were busy with some of their intimate affairs:

"Firing at detected targets with ground surveillance results in aimless consumption and overexpenditure of shells. The corrective aviation unit of the artillery department of the army was inactive.

During the entire period of hostilities (!) aviation did not take a single photograph of the enemy's resistance centers and firing points, as a result of which the photobatteries of the regimental RGCs were inactive. The artillery department of the army, knowing this, never raised the issue before the Air Force department about taking photographs from the air, as well as about detecting enemy firing points by fire flashes at night.

The result is the picture "Assault on the village of Krutik by the 19th Guards Division":

"Before the start of the offensive, the foreground, the front line of the enemy's defense and his fire system were not reconnoitered. Artillery did not destroy the enemy fortifications and did not suppress his firing points.

The advancing units turned out to be unprepared to overcome enemy engineering obstacles in the forefield zone. For example, the 1218th Guards Rifle Regiment, having reached the wire barriers, could not overcome them due to the lack of wire shears. The 697th sapper battalion (!), attached to the regiment, did not have scissors either, although there are quite a sufficient number of them in the rear depots. Due to the fact that passages were not made in the barriers, the 1218th regiment had to make a half-kilometer detour under enemy fire. In addition, the sappers of the same battalion did not neutralize anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, and the enemy minefields were not overcome ...

There was no interaction between the military branches. During the attack on the village of Krutik, the infantry of the 1218th regiment broke away from the tanks and lay down, leaving them without support. The tanks that broke into the village were forced to return, having lost

164

three cars. The escort artillery could not satisfy all the demands of the infantry, as it did not have enough ammunition. Therefore, the enemy batteries of anti-aircraft guns and heavy machine guns in the village of Zapolye, which continuously fired at the flank of the advancing 1347th regiment, were not suppressed.

There were instances of panic and provocation in parts of the group. In the 2nd battalion of the 1347th regiment, one of the soldiers shouted: "We are surrounded!" Random shooting rose, confusion appeared among the fighters. The first battalion was sent to liquidate the non-existent encirclement, which was separated from the immediate combat mission within an hour because of this. Since by this time most of the middle command staff was out of action, the panic that had arisen was liquidated slowly, and its direct culprits remained undetected.

Meanwhile, the commanders, on the basis of interrogations of prisoners taken from the German consolidated combat groups, revealed an incredible number of "pinned" enemy divisions. After the war, they will refer to their own fake reports as archival documents. Here is an example:

"Enemy forces can be judged because by the end of April 1942, the troops of the 59th Army were opposed by up to ten infantry, one motorized division and three SS regiments, supported by strong artillery and mortar groups" (See Archive of the USSR Ministry of Defense, fund 416, inventory 10437, file 13, page 8).

Then, of course ... On April 8, the front commander asked the Headquarters for permission to stop the attacks. Not for long, four days.

In April, a thaw set in, then heavy rains came, washing away the "column paths" trodden in the snow, the only road supplying the army with everything necessary turned into a mess, and the surrounding area into a continuous swamp. Lakes, numerous rivers and streams burst their banks. Water flooded the positions and dugouts, the soldiers moved into huts and log cabins, wooden decks were built for the cannons. Vehicles have finally come to a standstill. Only cartridges for small arms and small-caliber mines were delivered to the troops. Artillerymen with whole divisions were withdrawn from the front line and sent to the rear to provide themselves with fire supplies: if the mountain does not go to Mohammed, then Mohammed goes to the mountain. V.P. Dmitriev recalls:

"Only the commanders of the guns and the gunner remained at the guns, everyone else was at work. Teams were constantly sent to rear depots, which is 50-55 km there and back. But such a march was made in 5-6 days. Our one projectile and charge to it

weighed

about 30 kg. This means that one person could bring a maximum of only one shell and charge, and the second carried food, which was mostly eaten during the march. So

The result of such campaigns was extremely modest.

By decision of the Military Council of the front, for the supply of food and the removal of the wounded, the construction of a narrow-gauge railway from Novaya Kerest to Myasny Bor began. It was laid by army and front-line road builders, attracting the local population. From the positions to the rear, the fighters took out lezhnevkas. By

at night they felled the forest, laid logs through the swamps, laid wooden decks on them - all this, in the absence of fastening material, without a single nail. Previously, no meaningful activity was observed to create a communications network for supplying and transferring troops, there was no road service, and they never gathered to build a front-line rocade, because no one thought that they would have to sit in the Volkhov swamps for two whole years. What kind of maneuver by forces and what kind of surprise could there be if, for example, the 378th Rifle Division spent ten days on a 15-kilometer march in its own rear from Mostki to Glushitsa!

The political administration of the front took the initiative and proclaimed a movement to collect "ownerless and trophy property." Indeed, along with snowdrops, mountains of scattered weapons and ammunition, mostly of Soviet production, crawled out. Within a month, the following were collected from the forests: 8 guns (three 76-mm, four 45-mm, one 107-mm); 121 machine guns (34 easel, 87 manual), 43 mortars, 13 anti-tank rifles, 3737 rifles, 187 machine guns, 7600 shells, over 7000 mines, 5180 grenades, 236,400 rifle cartridges, 10,450 cartridges other. All their own, domestic. Trophies turned out to be much smaller: 2 tanks, 2 cars, 2 guns, 5 motorcycles, 4 bicycles, 8 light and 4 heavy machine guns, 67,000 rifle cartridges, 1,100 anti-tank shells.

The fauna corresponding to the relief came to life. Tells I.I. Kalabin:

"Damned mosquitoes, flies, lice are our hated enemies. What writer would describe them if he had never been bitten? And I will never forget them until the end of my days. Lice is not a new thing, but on such a scale ... Gray devils ate us with anger, completely covering the body and clothes. They were not crushed - just, if there was a free minute, they shook them off to the ground. They, parasites, managed to live 5-6 pieces inside each button. It's no joke - six months without a bath! And all six months they did not undress.

Here is part of the report from the deputy head of the political department of the Volkhov Front, Brigadier Commissar Ganenko, to the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army:

"The soldiers of the units of the 191st division are 70% affected by lice. In a separate communications battalion of the 366th division - by 60%, in the 1222nd regiment of the same division - by 50%. Approximately the same situation in other compounds ...

At a meeting of army doctors on the issue of combating epidemiological diseases in units, it was pointed out that a lot of lice was observed in sanitary battalions, hospitals, and that the medical staff themselves were often unclean ... Many commanders and fighters did not wash or change clothes for several months. Disinfection chambers in most units have not yet been organized. Sanitary control over the cleanliness of fighters and immediate treatment of lice are not practiced ...

The commissariat inertly carries out orders to organize laundry in divisions and to provide units with soap and linen. In the 225th and 267th divisions and the 25th brigade there is absolutely no linen exchange fund, units of the 191st division have 25 %

the required fund. In the units of the 59th Army there is not even a hair clipper."

The fattest bloodsucking soldiers were nicknamed "KV" - in honor of the tank. The lice were followed by outbreaks of typhus. The nutritional situation worsened
the horse is over:

"First, horses died of malnutrition, then people ate them. No wonder they say: a man is more tenacious than a dog. And that's right: the dog sniffs and will not eat. We dug up all the dead lottadei from under the snow and ate them. From this, the soldiers began to have intestinal disorders. It happened that you didn't have time to lower the pttans. A real disaster!

The Germans saw everything, because they were nearby, behind some river ten meters wide. What mockery, humiliation, what humiliation had to endure from them - God forbid! .. We ate horses - we carry shells on ourselves, waist-deep in water. The Germans play harmonicas, sing songs, mock: "Russ, kup-kup!" What is it to them: they are in the villages, in a dry place, and we, Ivans, are again fools.

There have been cases of suicide. The fighting was carried out mainly in the neck of the "bottle" and in the band of the 54th Army. Fedyuninsky until the very dismissal, replacing the bloodless divisions and knocked out tank units, drove and drove his troops through the muddy swamps to Lyuban.

The general did not have "hard memories" of these battles, apparently because he was unable to achieve anything by commanding a powerful grouping consisting of ten divisions (3rd Guards, 11, 80, 115, 177, 198, 281, 285, 294, 311), five rifle brigades (32, 33, 137, 140, 6th marines), four tank brigades (16, 98, 122, 124), a separate ski, five artillery and one guards mortar regiment, separate tank, ski, airtasked battalions.

The headquarters of the Volkhov Front, having accumulated "great experience", was again preparing a "general offensive." The commander assured everyone that "the current situation in the Luban direction, along with the presence of difficulties, is more favorable than in previous periods of operations."

However, the time has come for intrigues and shuffling of the general's deck.

Stalin decided back in March that the leadership of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts needed to be changed. He offered to head the Volkhov Front to Voroshilov, but the marshal did not want to take responsibility for the "truly front", bluntly stating that he was afraid of "failing in this matter." The Supreme Commander was finally convinced that in this war the "first red officer" was not his assistant. Lieutenant General L.A. went to Leningrad. Govorov. On March 9, a new deputy arrived in Malaya Vishera in the campaign with Voroshilov, Malenkov and the deputy commander of the Red Army Air Force, General Novikov

Commander of the Volkhov Front, Lieutenant General Andrei Andreevich Vlasov

(1901-1946).

167

In their post-war memoirs, giving retrospective assessments of events and people, with an eye to the ideological department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, our memoirists, mentioning Vlasov, paint a portrait of mediocrity with the moral character of a potential traitor. For example, Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky says:

"Vlasov, not distinguished by his great commanding abilities, and, moreover, extremely unstable and cowardly by nature, was completely inactive."

Marshall is just lying. At the time of his appointment, General Vlasov was at the zenith of his glory, being one of the most promising military leaders of the Red Army. Commanding the 20th Army during the Battle of Moscow, for the successful operation to liberate Solnechnogorsk and Volokolamsk, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Battle, promoted in rank and earned Stalin's special favor. Newspapers wrote a lot and flatteringly about him, published his portraits. Army General Zhukov highly appreciated Vlasov's fighting qualities, his operational training and organizational skills. And he came to the Volkhov Front "to apply the experience of the victory near Moscow."

Meretskov in his memoirs, of course, also writes that he did not immediately like the deputy:

"This adventurer, completely devoid of conscience and honor, did not even think about improving things at the front. With bewilderment, I watched my deputy, who remained silent at meetings and did not show any initiative. Vlasov carried out my orders very sluggishly. I grew irritated and dissatisfied."

However, Meretskov really experienced irritation and discontent: after all, in the short term, Vlasov was supposed to take his place, and both generals knew this. For example, a recording of a telephone conversation between Vlasov and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief has been preserved, in which he asks to be left in the position of deputy, since Meretskov has extensive experience * in combat operations in a wooded swampy area. Being in captivity, Vlasov also described Meretskov impartially:

"Egoist... A very nervous, distracted person. A calm conversation between the commander of the front and the commanders of the armies was almost impossible."

On March 20, the front commander sent his deputy at the head of a special commission to the 2nd shock army, from where he was not destined to return. On April 8, having drawn up an inspection report, the commission departed, and Vlasov remained, since it turned out that General Klykov was "seriously ill." According to Merepkov, the 54-year-old army commander "was seriously ill back in February", this was reflected in the performance of his duties, and "I had the idea of replacing the army commander more than once." However, at that time, Kirill Afanasyevich did not remove General Klykov from the army, but removed from his post a completely healthy chief of staff and

head of the operations department.

The head of artillery, General Degtyarev, having published his memoirs before Meretskov, did not yet know anything about the marshal's diagnosis, so he rejected

168

I did not notice any changes in the health of Commander Klykov, and he directly connected his removal from office with military failures and the work of inspectors from the front headquarters:

"The act of the commission was read out, and by the evening she left the army. "That's it," said Klykov gloomily, say goodbye to her, and began to sort through the contents in the drawers of his desktop. Premonition did not deceive him: a few days later he was laughed at

from the post of commander of the 2nd shock army.

On April 16, the allegedly ill Klykov was sent by plane to the rear. The question naturally arose, to whom to entrust the leadership of the troops of the 2nd shock army? On the same day, a telephone conversation took place between A.A. Vlasov and divisional commissioner I.V. Zueva with Meretskov. Zuev proposed to appoint Vlasov to the post of commander, and Vlasov - the chief of staff of the army, Colonel P.S. Vinogradov. The military council of the front supported Zuev's idea.

So the "vile traitor to the Motherland" Vlasov became commander of the 2nd shock army on April 20, while remaining deputy front commander. He received troops that were practically no longer able to fight, he received an army that had to be saved. Since mid-April, less than half of the norm was given out, there were no other products at all. The shortage of personnel in divisions reached 70%. Artillery was deprived of shells. Frostbitten, starving, lice-ridden fighters sat for weeks and months in swampy swamps.

Vlasov could not refuse the appointment, although he perfectly understood what ass he was shoved into. Major I. Kuzin, a former adjutant general, said during interrogation:

"In a conversation with Zuev and Vinogradov, Vlasov repeatedly said that the great strategists - this is him at the address of Comrade Meretskov - led the army to death. Vlasov addressed Meretskov as follows: the title is great, but the abilities ... - he kept silent further, but made it clear.

Meretskov at that time reported on the "gap in the enemy's defense", on the 75,000-strong grouping, which he would soon surround and destroy, but "the planned offensive was not destined to come true."

General M.S. Khozin turned his combination. He reported to Stavka that the main reason for the failure of the Luban operation was the lack of interaction between the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts:

"We operate in isolation. In January, the Volkhov Front launched an offensive, the Leningrad Front was unable to really support it, because the troops of 54 A were exhausted in human and material terms. In February, the Volkhov Front was exhausted. Leningradsky accumulated strength. At the end of February and in March, the Leningrad Front began to advance, but not supported by the Volkhov Front, it also ran out of steam. The other day, Volkhovsky began to advance again, Leningradsky was not able to support, because the divisions of the 54th Army were exhausted. Such a situation cannot be recognized as tolerable in the future. Actions must

169

be simultaneous, which would not allow the enemy to maneuver his reserves and fend off our blows.

Conclusion: the fronts must be united, entrusting the business of breaking the blockade to one single commander, specifically, General Khozin.

Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov opposed this proposal, but Stalin took the position of a cunning commander, and on April 20 a directive was signed to transform the Volkhov Front into a task force within the Leningrad Front. Army General Meretskov, together with the accumulated "experience", was sent to the Western direction, deputy to Zhukov. Already on April 23, General Khozin, with "a directive in his pocket and in a very cheerful mood," appeared in Malaya Vishera.

Meretskov, on his way to his new destination, visited Headquarters and reported to Stalin on the situation of the 2nd Shock Army:

"/ She / is completely exhausted and in the existing composition she can neither attack nor defend. Its communications are under the threat of attacks by German troops. If

Nothing

do not accept, then a catastrophe is inevitable.

He said that one of two decisions must be made: either to significantly strengthen the army with troops and equipment, or to withdraw it as quickly as possible to the Chudovo-Novgorod road line. Kirill Afanasyevich was promised to take into account the expressed considerations.

Lieutenant General L.A. became the commander of the Leningrad Group of Forces. Govorov. Appointments to the Western Front were received by Generals I.I. Fedyuninsky and I.V. Galanin. Major General A.M. took over the command of the 54th and 59th armies. Sukhomlin and Major General I.T. Korovnikov. The 8th Army was received by Lieutenant General F.N. Starikov.

After the organizational and personnel reform, the commander of the united front and at the same time the Volkhov group of troops could fully concentrate on the Luban direction. For this Khozin received six armies and three corps! In total, they had 39 divisions, 14 rifle and 6 tank

brigades, 15 separate battalions, 24 separate artillery and 7 guards mortar regiments, a total of 356 thousand people, 4328 guns and mortars, 191 tanks. And this is despite the fact that since the beginning of the operation, Soviet troops have lost 308,367 people killed and wounded - almost 100% of the original composition. Meanwhile, some naive people are still surprised: how could we lose 27 million killed?! It can not be!

Leningraders survived the first military winter, the most terrible. The highest death rate reached in early February. On some days, 4,500-4,700 citizens died. In total, according to incomplete data, 96 thousand people died in February.

The peak of cannibalism fell on the same month - 612 people were arrested "for

170

eating human meat" (in total, more than two thousand were caught until the spring of 1943). In Sestroretsk and at Razliv station, a gang of six female cannibals operated for three months.

The current German Themis has been looking for a suitable article for a homosexual cannibal for half a year; the Soviet, not tormented by the intricacies of jurisprudence "under conditions of a special situation", sculpted everyone article 59-3 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR - banditry. At first, by decision of the Military Tribunal, they were shot without exception. Later, they began to distinguish between murders "for the purpose of eating the meat of the dead" (execution) and simply "eating cadaverous meat" (in this case they were given up to 10 years in prison). It is interesting that among the persons prosecuted for these crimes, 41% were proletarians, and employees who received twice the mention rations - only 4.5%.

The city was literally littered with corpses, mostly "not absolutely necessary" citizens. The head of the Department of Communal Services of the Executive Committee of the Leningrad City Council A. Karpushenko reported:

"If in December a significant part of the dead was transported to the cemetery by the population, then in January this sharply decreased. Such a phenomenon took on large proportions when the dead began to be thrown en masse to hospitals, clinics, thrown onto stairs, into courtyards and even on the streets of the city. Organizations and enterprises took out the corpses of dead people from the city and, fearing that the administration of the cemeteries would not accept them, due to the lack of documents, dumped the corpses unnoticed by the guards in the cemeteries or the streets near them. On Kremenchugskaya street near the outer doors of the mortuary hospital named after Botkin, daily randomly thrown dead people lay in a heap. In addition, they could often be seen in the mornings thrown to the gates of houses, on the stairs.

The apparatus of the Pokhoronnoe Delo trust, despite the additional distribution of bread and vodka to workers, turned out to be unprepared for such a scale: "For failure to take measures to prepare the required number of spare trenches and streamline the work of cemeteries" before the New Year, he was arrested and sentenced to 8 years in prison freedom head of the trust Koshman. That was just the beginning:

"The last days of January and February were the period when the number of burials reached its highest point. In hospitals, hospitals, at evacuation centers and in regional morgues, a large number of corpses accumulated ... For a significant number of days in February, 6-7 thousand corpses per day were brought to the Piskarevskoye cemetery alone for burial ...

On February 3, 1942, the Executive Committee of the Leningrad City Council decided to use a sand pit at the Bogoslovsky cemetery for a mass grave, which was filled within 5-6 days with 60,000 human corpses. Bomb craters at the Bogoslovsky cemetery were also used for burial, in which about 1000 corpses were buried. Later, it was decided to use part of the anti-tank ditch located next to the quarry on the north side, where more than 10 thousand dead were also buried, for burial. On the northern outskirts of the Serafimovsky cemetery, there were 18 wolf pits,

171

prepared as anti-tank obstacles, were used for burial and about 15,000 corpses were buried in them.

But the rate of arrival of corpses at the cemeteries significantly outstripped the rapidly increasing pace of trench preparation, and therefore the implementation of measures to use the quarry and wolf pits for burial did not eliminate the disproportion between the presence of ready trenches and the delivery of corpses to the cemetery.

At the Piskarevsky cemetery, the number of unburied corpses, stacked in piles up to 180-200 meters long and up to 2 meters high, due to the lack of trenches, reached 20-25 thousand on certain days of February; at the Serafimovsky cemetery, the morgue and the church were filled with corpses, and some of them lay simply in the cemetery. A stack of about 5,000 corpses also lay at the Bolsheokhtinsky cemetery, where the mortuary was completely filled with corpses. At the cemetery of the Victims of the 9th of January, about 3,000 unburied corpses lay in a hay barn. This situation in the cemeteries lasted until the end of February 1942.

Certainly, all sorts of philologists, historians, art critics and other intellectuals in the humanities turned out to be unnecessary for the authorities, they were not evacuated and not fed (only academicians and corresponding members were fed). In the winter of 1941/42 at Leningrad University, more than 100 professors and associate professors perished from starvation and disease. The Polytechnic Institute lost 46 doctors and candidates of sciences, the Construction Institute 38. When the Hermitage was finally taken out in April, MPVO officials found 109 corpses in the cellars of the building.

In March, another 81.5 thousand people died in the city, in April - about 75 thousand. These are data from the monthly special reports of the UNKVD, but they are far from complete. Tens of thousands of Leningraders died during the evacuation or shortly thereafter. Thousands of corpses in shelters, trenches, under the snow, were discovered only in the spring, during the general cleaning of the city, organized to prevent epidemics.

How many residents of Leningrad and its suburbs died of starvation, no one still knows for sure, but today everyone agrees that at least one million

Human. The same A. Karpushenko, summing up his secret report, admitted:

"Unfortunately, there is no organization in the city that could give the exact number of people who died in the city of Leningrad ... No one was not only prepared for such a size of mortality and lightning speed of its growth, but no one could ever think of something like that ... According to the cemeteries of the city, far from being accurate, they buried 1,093,695 dead in the period from 1/UP-1941 to 1/UP-1942."

At the same time, the disabled population, the wounded, factory equipment, and cultural values were taken out. In the period from January 22 to April 15, 554 thousand people were evacuated from Leningrad, including only in the second half of March - 48 thousand Finns, Germans and "socially dangerous elements", carefully provided with a special convoy of the NKVL and money for food. Beyond Ladoga, hunger ended for them, but due to irreversible changes, Leningraders died by the thousands along the entire route.

172

The total population was reduced to 1 d million people.

Malnutrition seriously affected the combat capability of the troops of the front. For eight months, starting from November 1941, more than 62,000 servicemen diagnosed with alimentary dystrophy were admitted to the hospitals of the front-line and army districts alone, of which 12,416 people died.

However, the city survived, overturning all the calculations of the German generals.

Gradually, with incredible difficulties, the work of the Military Highway was adjusted. The transfer of the supply base from Tikhvin to Voybokalo and Zhikharevo significantly reduced the route of vehicles. On January 18, the plan for the delivery of goods to Leningrad was completed for the first time. In the second half of January, in connection with the improved delivery, there was a noticeable increase in food supplies. From January 24, Leningraders began to receive 400 grams of bread for a work card, 300 grams for employees, 250 grams for children's and dependent cards. On February 11, the grain norm increased by another 100 grams. Supply rates for other foodstuffs were increased. Meat, butter, cranberries, dry onions began to be issued according to the cards.

In mid-February, by decision of the State Defense Committee, the Voybokalo-Kobona railway line was built, bringing trains close to Ladoga. More and more cargo was delivered along the ice road to Leningrad: in January, about 53 thousand tons were transported, in February - more than 86 thousand, and in March - more than 118 thousand tons. This made it possible to concentrate in the city two months of untouchable food supplies and carry-over stocks for 6-8 days.

In the most difficult period for Leningrad, the Road of Life played a decisive role in supplying the city and evacuating the population. Only thanks to her Leningrad managed to survive.

The road was serviced by 17281 servicemen, 3624 vehicles, 147 tractors, 960 horses. All this economy was led by the captain of the 2nd rank M.A. Nefedov. Ground protection of the route was carried out by a separate rifle regiment, the main forces of which were concentrated on the ice of Lake Ladoga, 8-12 km from the coast occupied by the enemy. The regiment created two defensive lines, on which pillboxes were built, shelters from ice blocks, and machine-gun points were installed. The air defense of the communication was provided by the batteries of the 21st anti-aircraft artillery battalion located along it (fourteen 37-mm automatic guns, up to 40 machine-gun installations). With the strengthening of the ice in the area of the route, even 85-mm guns were installed. In addition, nomadic groups were created from small-caliber guns and anti-aircraft machine guns mounted on special skids. Railway stations and bases on the banks of Ladoga were covered by special separate anti-aircraft units and air defense armored trains. The sky was guarded by five regiments of fighter aircraft of the Front Air Force, two regiments of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, and air defense aviation. The control over the ice regime and the operation of the route was entrusted to the hydrographic service of the Baltic Fleet.

Over the entire period of the existence of the Road of Life, more than 360 thousand tons of cargo were transported along it, including 262 thousand tons of food and 32 thousand tons of

173

ammunition.

In mid-April, the ice thickness on Lake Ladoga began to decrease rapidly, water appeared on its surface, and cracks hidden under it presented a particular danger. From April 16 to April 21, vehicles were moving through continuous water. One of the last to cross Ladoga to the eastern shore were 11,000 replacement soldiers for the 54th Army. At 4 pm on April 24, the road was closed. Preparations for summer navigation were in full swing.

The living conditions have improved. To a large extent, the sewerage network and water supply were restored, schools were opened, and some cinemas resumed their work. On April 15, the trams began to move again. The city "Parteigenosse", having made sure that the city resisted, cheered up and immediately began to tighten the screws. So, the secretary of the city committee Ya.F. Kapustin announced:

"Receiving an average monthly salary by Leningraders in conditions when the vast majority of enterprises were inactive, corrupted a certain part of the people, the people no longer respected discipline."

Well, you can't rely on the ungrateful people in anything, they corrupted in the blockade, while various Kapustins and popkovs, without closing their eyes, took care of their happiness.

In April, ice drift began on the Neva. He cut off from the left bank the "piglet" garrison - the 330th rifle regiment of the 86th division, under the command of Major S.A. Blokhin. The German command decided to take advantage of this circumstance and liquidate the Nevsky bridgehead. On April 24, after a heavy bombardment and artillery preparation, the attack of six battalions of the 1st division began. Despite

to the desperate resistance of the defenders, who received two companies of the 284th regiment as reinforcements, the Germans managed to break through to the Neva and isolate the garrison. The last thing they saw from the right bank was a piece of maskhalat, on which it was written in large letters: "Help."

Non-commissioned officer W. Buff from the 227th Infantry Division, who corrected artillery fire in those days, wrote in his diary:

"When the bridgehead was already in our hands, the Russians made a hopeless attempt to cross the Neva in boats in order to launch a counterattack. What was not destroyed during the crossing was completed during the landing. You don't know what to be more surprised at: the madness of those who ordered this hopeless operation, or the courage of the suicide bombers who carried it out.

April 29 "Nevsky Piglet" fell. He cost the Leningrad Front 140 thousand dead. They all died in vain.

Despite the fact that none of the operations of the winter campaign achieved the set strategic goals, Stalin and his commanders still

174

they thought that the Red Army was strong enough to crush the Wehrmacht with mighty blows, which they considered no longer capable of serious resistance. They were pushed to this conclusion, on the one hand, by the figures of a significant increase in military production, and on the other, by the fantastic figures of German losses provided by the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff, which apparently drew this information from the victorious reports of the Soviet Information Bureau.

Therefore, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command decided to continue the general strategic offensive in all directions. Offensive operations were planned near Leningrad, in the Demyansk region, in the Smolensk and Kursk directions, in Karelia, on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front in order to eventually reach the line of the state border of the USSR.

The Karelian Front, in particular, was developing an offensive operation to break through the Finnish defenses in the Medvezhyegorsk direction with access along the northern shore of Lake Ladoga to the rear of enemy troops on the Karelian Isthmus.

Hitler outlined his plans for the summer in Directive No. 41 of April 5, 1942: to throw all his forces to the south, capture the industrial Donbass, the wheat fields of the Kuban, the oil-bearing regions of the Caucasus and deprive the Soviet Union of economic centers vital for waging war. In the north, Leningrad should have been taken in order to finally establish contact with the Finns. But first, two army groups were supposed to destroy the main forces of the Red Army in the Stalingrad area and cross the Caucasus Range through deep detours:

"The final encirclement of Leningrad and the capture of Ingermanland are postponed until

as long as a change in the situation in the area of encirclement or the release of other forces sufficient for this do not create appropriate opportunities.

Prior to this favorable moment, measures were planned as a minimum program to eliminate the Oranienbaum bridgehead.

On May 1, 1942, Stalin addressed the armed forces with Order No. 130. It stated:

"For the entire Red Army to ensure that 1942 becomes the year of the final defeat of the German Fascist troops and the liberation of Soviet soil from the Nazi scoundrels."

The beginning of the defeat was to be put by the Kharkov offensive operation and the destruction of Manstein's troops in the Crimea.

On May 2, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front reported to the Headquarters a plan of action for the coming month, in which it was noted that "the main task of the troops of the front - the liberation of Leningrad from the blockade - will be carried out by conducting a series of successive front-line operations."

The plan provided that the 2nd shock army would temporarily go over to the defensive on

175

occupied front. The 191st and 259th rifle divisions are detached from its composition and transferred to the 59th army to create a strike force for the period of the operation to eliminate the enemy in the Tregubovo-Spasskaya Polist area.

At the same time, the 2nd shock army is preparing to continue the Luban operation, for which it includes the 6th guards corps (4th and 24th guards, 165th rifle divisions, 24th and 58th rifle brigades, which should be restored by mid-May). Approximately, the 2nd Shock Army, upon the readiness of the 6th Guards Corps, was to go on the offensive in the last ten days of May, simultaneously with the 54th Army.

The direction of the main attack of the 2nd shock was planned from the Krivino-Ruchi area to the Babino station, in order to cut off and liquidate the Chudovskaya enemy grouping in cooperation with the 59th Army. To develop success, it was planned to use the replenished 13th cavalry corps, the 372nd and 378th rifle divisions. The rate of the proposal of the front approved.

Thus, there was no talk of any withdrawal of the 2nd shock army from the bag, at a time when its position had already become critical, although the army remained a shock army only in name. She could even defend herself with difficulty. In fact, surrounded, along with the units of the 52nd and 59th armies that entered the breakthrough, were

over 62 thousand people without food and 600 guns without shells. There was practically no supply, sometimes the "maize" (U-2 aircraft), who suffered heavy losses from German fighters, dropped paper bags with crackers, most of which broke or disappeared in the swamps, and patriotic leaflets:

"Grusov - to shoot, the brave ones - glorify. Destroy the Nazi invaders ... Hold on! Help will come to you"

The Germans carried out their propaganda: they hung loaves of bread on trees and persuaded them to surrender: "There is only one road from hell to heaven, run across to us!", But there were few defectors (according to the political department, 47 people left for the enemy in April, in May - 17, deserted - 84).

The finished narrow-gauge railway did not last long. The Germans soon bombed the cuckoo locomotives, "and the orderlies manually pushed the trolleys with the wounded, putting corpses in place of the twisted sleepers. It was only here that it became clear that "the army cannot continue a further offensive against Lyuban." Khozin, having delved into the situation, was forced to abandon the offensive and take measures to withdraw troops. He told Stalin:

"The further conduct of operations by the 2nd shock army is an extremely risky undertaking and, due to its unsecured interface, is very dangerous."

It is necessary either to replenish the front with reserves and, to begin with, defeat the enemy in the area of Spasskaya Polisti, or to blow a retreat and save the troops. Khozin himself was inclined towards the first option, so he asked Moscow to "urgently give" the front at least 100 tanks and five aviation regiments. But May 13

176

member of the Military Council of the 2nd Shock Army I.V. Zuev flew to Malaya Vishera, reported on the hopeless situation of the army and returned with the directive of the command of the Leningrad Front No. 00120 to begin preparations for the sequential withdrawal of formations to a previously prepared line. Withdrawal begins at the signal "Forward".

Soviet "historians in uniform" consider April 30 as the end date of the Luban offensive operation, while the operation to withdraw the 2nd shock army from the encirclement began on May 22. Accordingly, with this "chronology" they are counting losses. You might think that the three weeks separating the two dates, the soldiers of the Volkhov Front rested in a forest resort, or, having agreed with the Germans on a truce, maliciously sabotaged the execution of order No. 130. But no, it was during this period, according to the memoirs of private I.I. Belikov, the newly arrived, newly formed 2nd Rifle Division of the 59th Army, which was given the task of breaking through the enemy's defenses at Spasskaya Polisti, with a bayonet attack (!) Was killed:

"In the early morning of May 1, our regiment launched an offensive. "Katyusha" fired a volley of thermite shells, and one of the German firing points died out. We went to

attack. In the very first minutes of the battle, the battalion commander, the chief of staff of the battalion and my platoon commander, junior lieutenant Miroshnikov, were killed. But still, our regiment went 2 km deep into the rear of the Nazis. At the same time, we captured the food warehouse. It was he who turned out to be a trap - the place of death of my fellow soldiers. When we were hungry, like wolves, pounced on food, bombing and shelling began. From our platoon of 25 people, five survived ...

When it got dark, we crawled away to the cemetery of the soldiers of our regiment. The commissar of the regiment - in a new overcoat, with three field sleepers in his buttonholes - was sitting under a pine tree. The explosion twisted the pine tree, and the commissar's head lay on one side of the tree, and the body on the other. Everywhere the earth was mixed with blood. Alive, with their arms and legs torn off, they ask: "Brother, shoot" ...

Throughout the breakthrough of the German defense - 500 m along the front - there was a blockage of corpses and wounded. In the mornings, when there was no bombardment, we took up defensive positions at the forefront. At night, they dragged the corpses and made a flooring out of them so as not to lie in the swamp water. So 10 days passed. They seemed to have forgotten about us: neither food nor ammunition was delivered. On the tenth day I got up early and went to see if any of our people were left behind! alive? Me noticed the Germans are yelling: "Ivan, go eat porridge!" But they didn't shoot - they weren't afraid of us at all.

... I asked the junior lieutenant how many were left alive in our regiment and who was now the regiment commander. Kukuev - dirty, hungry - answered that we had only

58 people and he is for the commander. We had no shells, no cartridges, no food, but we could not leave the front line. Behind us, at the Moscow-Leningrad highway, there was a blockade. Leaving, with overfishing, was punishable by execution. There were two ways: death or captivity. None of our fighters gave up...

Junior Lieutenant Kukuev allowed me to go to the division headquarters and report to the command about our situation. I got to the headquarters, sought out the chief of communications

177

Major Malofeev's division and spoke about the situation. And he asks: "Did you save the communications property?" At that time, for the loss of property, execution was due: a coil of cable was valued more than a human life ...

Our division was replenished, but in fact re-formed, and again sent to a breakthrough.

Other formations fought fierce and unsuccessful battles for the capture of Tregubovo and Priyutino. Only on May 13 did the 59th Army receive an order to "cease active operations and go on the defensive."

Finally, on May 14, the Headquarters issued a directive on the withdrawal of the troops of the 2nd shock army "from the area it occupies." It was not about leaving the encirclement, but about an organized retreat to the line of Olkhovka, which was advantageous for defense - Lake Tigoda, regrouping and delivering a strong blow from the west with the forces of two divisions and four rifle brigades towards the 59th Army in order to eliminate the enemy in the ledge of Priutino - Spasskaya Polist. General Korovin was to use six divisions, two rifle and two tank brigades to accomplish this task. The preparation and implementation of the operation was given 7-10 days.

Moscow could not help the Volkhovites in any way. May 1942 was marked by a series of defeats for the Red Army on all fronts. In the Crimea, Manstein's troops defeated three Soviet armies and captured Kerch; under. In Kharkov, Kleist's tank units completed the encirclement of twenty-seven divisions of the Southwestern Front; the Rzhev-Vyazemskaya (777 thousand killed and wounded) and Demyanskaya (246 thousand) operations ended in failure and huge losses.

During the latter, in contrast to the fate of the 2nd Shock Army, von Seydlitz successfully unblocked the encircled Brockdorff grouping on April 24, and the Germans did not leave the cauldron, but after repulsing all Soviet attacks, they firmly settled in the Ramushev corridor 40 kilometers long, 6- 8 km, and held Demyansk until February 1943.

At the initiative of Zhdanov, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front decided to evacuate the local population along with the retreating army. In Smolny, they had a vague idea of what the corridor to the Bolshoy Land looked like, along which thousands of old people, women and children had to get out. From the peppy reports of the military there, they could well have assumed that the trains from Myasny Bor were running almost on schedule. Villagers, not wanting to evacuate, hid in forests and gardens. The detectives caught them, burned the houses that had survived after the battles and air raids, so that the enemy would not get it.

The signal "Forward" sounded only on May 22. Parts of the 2nd shock army were successively withdrawn from their positions and moved towards Novaya Kerest, and then towards the village of Krechno and towards Myasny Bor. The head of the rear of the army reported:

"The personnel were exhausted, pushing the materiel out of the swamps towards

178

narrow-gauge railway and lay road. Prior to this, for a month and a half, the army was on a starvation ration. There were no stocks of ammunition and food in the army, since there was no supply due to lack of fuel ... On May 30, on the territory occupied by the army, there were 1,500 wounded in platforms and wagons, "a- 4,500 civilians in forest awaiting evacuation.

Khozin assured:

"The withdrawal of the 2nd shock army is proceeding according to plan, all the wounded have been taken out, the property has been evacuated to the rear."

However, this belated "maneuver" by the troops of the Volkhov Front failed. The enemy, clearly following the Soviet preparations, immediately launched active combat operations along the entire perimeter. The assistant to the head of the department of the Special Department, senior major of state security Moskalenko, signaled to the authorities:

"Khozin was slow to carry out the order of the Stavka, referring to the impossibility of taking equipment off-road and the need to build roads, by the beginning of June this year. The units did not begin to withdraw, however, the 6th General Staff of the Red Army, signed by KHOZIN and early. Itafont STELMAKH sent a report on the beginning of the withdrawal of army units. As it was later established, KHOZIN and STELMAKH

deceived the General Shitab, by this time the 2nd shock army was just starting
delay
rear of their connections. The 59th Army acted very indecisively, undertook several unsuccessful attacks and the tasks set by the Stavka - did not complete.

Nevertheless, by the middle of the month, they managed to withdraw the 13th cavalry corps (the cavalry, having finished eating their horses, went out with saddles on their shoulders) and the 6th guards corps, the remnants of the 378th rifle division, tank brigades, rocket mortars, partly heavy artillery. They were the first to start moving in accordance with the plan to continue the Luban operation.

On May 31, two German divisions (the 20th motorized from the north, the 58th infantry from the south) again blocked the exit to Myasny Bor, "tying" 9 divisions and 6 brigades in a bag with three regiments of the RGK of the 2nd shock, 52nd and 59th Army - about 50 thousand people. The 191st and 382nd rifle divisions managed to jump out of the "cauldron".

Energetic measures to restore communication of the encircled grouping were not taken in a timely manner by the Soviet command (except for the Khozin's telegram to Vlasov to "organize and decisively" strike from west to east). This allowed the enemy to organize a defense saturated with firing points one and a half kilometers deep along the eastern bank of the Polist River.

The 22nd and 57th rifle brigades and the 191st division, which had been pushed out to the river on May 30-31, could not overcome this line. The 2nd Shock Army continued to fight in complete encirclement. For defense in the north and west, the most combat-ready formations were left - 267, 92, 327, 19th Guards Rifle Divisions, 23rd Brigade - which provided the operations of the breakthrough group as part of the 46th and 382nd divisions, 22, 25, 53 th and 57th rifle brigades. Along the northwestern shore of the Zamoshsky swamp to Gorenka, the 305th rifle division was defending, with its left

the flank was advancing sharply together with the breakthrough group.

The actions of the Soviet units paralyzed the German dive-bombers, hanging in the air with impunity from dawn until dark. Daylight hours were almost 20 hours. The losses were huge. Red aviators were able to allocate 10 fighters to cover the troops.

Thus, the actions of the breakthrough group, at first on their own, and then with units of the 52nd and 59th armies, were not successful, although the Germans held the corridor with the forces of only one regiment! The artillery of the encircled group (874 barrels) was inactive due to lack of ammunition.

In early June, fierce battles began in the army's defense sectors. The enemy squeezed the ring, striking in the directions of Finev Lug and from the Pyatilipy region. The 2nd shock army made desperate attempts to break out of the bag. The 4th Army (44th, 288th, 310th Rifle Divisions) did not stand idle either, in which the commander again changed. Under the leadership of Major General N.I. Gusev, throughout

June and the first decade of July, the army, reinforced by the 185th and 195th tank brigades, 50 tanks each, and artillery, tried to eliminate the enemy's Volkhov bridgehead at Kirishi, five kilometers wide and two kilometers deep.

The task was not completed, although only from June 4 to June 15, more than 40 thousand shells and mines were fired at the Kirishi patch, aviation dealt the strongest blows. For this reason, this operation was deleted from Soviet military history, the losses in it are unknown.

And what do we know about the battles of the 54th Army in the "Pogostyev bag"? We completely forgot about the newly created 8th Army (128th, 265th, 286th rifle divisions, 1st rifle brigade, 107th tank battalion), has it really not done anything since January? This cannot be, although in the descriptions of the winter campaign it is practically not mentioned anywhere, as if it did not exist at all. There is only one phrase in the encyclopedia: "She fought in the Mginsky direction." Vela, that is. It is clear that they are ineffective.

After the May defeats of the Red Army, Comrade Stalin became very disappointed in many of his generals, for example, in Timoshenko, Kulik, Kozlov, Mekhlis; he yearned that he did not have "Hindenburgs". It took only a month to understand that General Khozin was not Hindenburg either. The commander of the united Leningrad Front was unable to break through the blockade of Leningrad, was unable to cope with the leadership of nine armies at once, three separate corps and two groups of troops, moreover, divided by the territory occupied by the enemy.

In principle, with the method of control that existed in the Red Army, this was an overwhelming task for any general. So after all, it was not for this that Khozin started the association.

The commander did not change his habits, he still drank a bottle of vodka

a day, dividing it for lunch, dinner and an evening movie show. A member of the Military Council of the front, army commissar Alexander Ivanovich Zaporozhets (1899-1959) reported "where it should have been" that every evening in his apartment Khozin "watched movies in the company of young telegraphers" (in his denunciations, Zaporozhets classified this as "everyday decay", and Khozin in letters of acquittal - as "a human attitude towards small workers").

Along the way, the commander enthusiastically intrigued against Zaporozhets and the head of the Special Department, Melnikov. He even tried to ignore Smolny, communicating directly with Moscow from Malaya Vishera and independently making fundamental decisions, including on the distribution of urban resources. This turned out to be the last straw. The experienced party apparatchik Zhdanov quickly and harshly put a stop to the "gross political mistake", explaining to Khozin that he again "didn't get to the bottom of the matter."

By a directive of June 3, General Leonid Alexandrovich Govorov (1897-1955) was appointed commander of the Leningrad Front - a completely unique case for those times. The new commander was a graduate of the Konstantinovskiy cadet school (in 1916) and a former Kolchak officer, he graduated from two academies (the Frunze Military Academy and the General Staff). Despite such a biography and even the fact that his wife was of a princely family, he was in 1937-39. due to some misunderstanding, he did not fall under the tribunal. Vlobavok, Govorov was a non-partisan, but this flaw was quickly corrected, after three weeks the commander became a full-fledged Bolshevik without any candidate experience.

Then the Headquarters recognized the decision to liquidate the Volkhov Front as erroneous. General M.S. Khozin was removed from his post "for failure to comply with the order of the Headquarters, separation from the troops, paper-bureaucratic methods of management", and also in connection with a serious conflict with members of the Military Council, and soon went to receive the 33rd Army of the Western Front. The Supreme Commander was obviously joking, albeit gloomily: Meretskov commanded the army.

On June 8, the Headquarters restored the Volkhov Front and General K.A. Meretskov as commander. Together with him, General A.M., Deputy Chief of the General Staff, arrived in Malaya Vishera. Vasilevsky. Two generals were given the task of "rescuing the 2nd shock army from the encirclement, even without heavy weapons and equipment."

Starting from June 10, large forces of the 59th and 52nd armies, supported by 250 guns and mortars, 60 tanks, and three rocket artillery battalions, continuously attacked the enemy ring from the outside. The 58th and 24th rifle, 7th guards and 29th tank brigades, 2, 374, 165th rifle, 25th and 87th cavalry divisions, separate battalions of other units, courses for lieutenants and a reserve of political workers of the front department.

2nd shock broke through to meet them. Colonel Kresik reported:

181

"On June 7, by decision of the Army Armed Forces, 80% of the personnel were put into operation, including artillerymen and mortarmen. However, the army was not successful due to

lack of ammunition and poorly organized interaction between units advancing from the east. There was nothing except cartridges, 45-mm shells and 50-mm mines ... The personnel received 30-40 grams of breadcrumbs, the wounded - 70-80 grams per person. The only food is horse meat. However, because of enemy aircraft, it was impossible to make fires, and horse meat was eaten raw, without salt. Exhaustion. Mortality in parts, especially in hospitals, and among the civilian population "...

The people in it were swollen with hunger. Needles, foliage, birch bark, alder cones, grass, hedgehogs and frogs, leather parts of ammunition were used as food:

"Hunger forced - and tarpaulin boots went into action. Did I ever think at the age of 23 that I would have to eat a whole horse with all the ammunition, bridle and tugs? But I had to ... I wanted to live, but there was no life. It would be necessary to die, but death did not come.

Hunger spiritually devastates a person, turning him into a lone beast, mindless and vicious, ready for any violence. This process is gradually, on the rise, corroding human dignity. A person is also changing outwardly: a smile disappears from his face - a dreary gloom appears, his eyes dart around, his teeth are tightly clenched, there are pits-dips on his necks, his speech is jerky, like in COOSNO-LANGUAGEoGgGO ...

The hungry do not remember the past, do not think about the future. Everything is blunted: a sense of duty, love for one's neighbor, for a compatriot, the laws of morality: only one passionate desire remains - to eat! Not a desire for death, no, but for life. Whatever, but live! To live physically, because spiritually such a person has long since died... Such is the power of the body over a person, and to overcome it - oh, how difficult!

Cases of cannibalism were recorded in the army.

By June 14, having driven back the 327th Rifle Division and the 23rd Brigade, the enemy captured Finev Lug. The 19th Guards (former 366th) Division withdrew to the Glukhoi Keresti area, but here the defensive line was not prepared in advance. On the site of the 92nd Infantry Division, the Germans captured Olkhovka and reached the line of the Omutny Creek. During June 17-20, the rearguard Soviet units were pushed back to the line of the Trubitsa River and the Barskaya Kanavka stream. But judging by the memoirs of Meretskov, he again, as in March, managed to "break through the corridor":

"Finally, the Germans could not stand it. On June 19, the 29th Tank Brigade broke through the German defenses and joined forces with the troops of the 2nd Shock Army. Two days later, a corridor 300-400 meters wide along the railway was pierced by a blow from the east and west. Using this corridor, a large group of wounded soldiers and commanders came out of the encirclement to Myasnaya Bor.

Then the thing that I most feared came up. Parts of the 2nd Shock Army, which participated in the breakthrough, instead of directing their efforts to crushing the breakthrough and securing the flanks, themselves pulled out after the wounded. In that

At the critical moment, the command of the 2nd shock army did not take measures to secure the flanks of the corridor and failed to organize the withdrawal of troops from the encirclement.

The Germans, having quickly figured out the situation, on the second day after the massive strike of their aircraft and artillery, again occupied the defensive structures on the right bank of the Polist River and thereby prevented the exit of our troops, ”

The only strange thing is that both the Nemps and the circled themselves, who allegedly used the corridor, did not notice this. In a radiogram dated June 20, Vlasov and Zuev reported:

“To the head of the General Staff. Chief of Staff of the Front. Copy: Korovnikov and Yakovlev. Please understand that parts of the eastern group are so bloodless that it is difficult to isolate escorts for tanks. The enemy defense along the Polist River was not violated. The position of the enemy is unchanged. The infantry of the 52nd and 59th armies did not reach the Polist River from the east. Our units are pinned down by enemy fire and have no advance. I ask for instructions on the infantry attack of the 52nd and 59th armies from the east. The 11 tanks that have broken through have no shells.”

Vasilevsky on the radio offered to send a plane for the Military Council of the Army and take its members out of the encirclement, but Vlasov categorically refused, saying that his place was in his troops.

Only on June 22, the soldiers of the 2nd shock fighters, reeling from hunger, managed to break through the German positions from their side. Until noon on June 23, 6018 wounded and about 1000 relatively healthy people left the encirclement. The first were sent to the hospital, of the second they formed a combined detachment under the command of Colonel Korkin, who was again driven into the Valley of Death.

The Germans then blocked the breakthrough. With a blow in the direction of the narrow-gauge railway, they broke through the front and captured New Kerest. The area occupied by Soviet troops was reduced to such a size that German artillery shot through it to the full depth. The communication node was broken, the control was broken. The army lost the only platform where the U-2 aircraft landed with food and ammunition. An eyewitness recalls:

"June. Northern white nights. German planes hovered over us for a whole day, dropping super-heavy bombs, pouring machine guns. Incessantly, the cannonade roared. One can become deaf from the crackle of breaking, burning trees, from the thunder and roar of artillery fire, the infernal tap dance of machine-gun bursts, the hysterical howl of mines. Each bullet hits the target, the projectile hits the target and the bomb also hits the target, because the crowding of troops is incredible.

That is no longer an army, but a market crowd. Complete confusion, communication between the parts is lost, control is broken. There is no obedience, even respect for commanders.

There is no information about our situation, only enemy propaganda rampaged ...

183

No villages, no roads, only fragments of logs and logs sunk in the swamp, once brought by sappers, and now completely destroyed. People rush between them, looking for a suitable shelter. The forest is burning, the peat is smoking... there are craters everywhere, mutilated trees, heaps of useless rifles, mangled barrels, trolleys and corpses, corpses everywhere. Thousands of foul-smelling corpses covered in flies, decomposing in the June sun...

On every bump, where it's drier, there are wounded. Screams and groans, pleas for help. Who asks for a drink, who begs to finish off, and no one cares about them. Indifferent, gloomy, half-mad people in wadded sweatshirts and tightly knotted earflaps wander through the forest (after all, mosquitoes and flies crawl in the little ones), with red eyes swollen from insomnia. What dream can be in a boiling hell?..

Almost no one has a watch, time has long been lost. Is it day or night? What day is it, what date? What awaits us - captivity or an attempt to break through?

On June 23, the Germans reached the Glushitspe River, on June 24 they occupied the Wood Field, cutting the log rail and the narrow gauge railway, along the route of which the materiel and the wounded were concentrated. Further advance of the enemy was suspended by support groups created from rear units that took up defense along the eastern bank of the Kerest River. At this time, Meretskov again and again cut through the "virtual" corridors:

"The night of June 24 has come. At 23.30, the troops of the 2nd shock army began to move. The tanks of the 29th tank brigade came out to meet them with armored assault troops, supported by the artillery of the 59th and 52nd armies... By morning, a small corridor formed along the narrow gauge railway and the first groups of soldiers and commanders who had left the encirclement appeared. They staggered from exhaustion. The withdrawal of troops continued until noon, but then stopped. The Germans managed to take control of the road.

By evening, the forces of the troops operating from the east again broke through the corridor and cleared the road. During the night and morning of June 25, the fighters and commanders of the 2nd Shock Army continued to exit along this passage, shot through by crossfire from two sides.

The tales of the front commander are reinforced in his memoirs by the representative of the Stavka Vasilevsky:

"In the end, our troops managed to break through a narrow gap and save a significant part of the 2nd Shock Army."

But from the inside of the ring, everything looked different. Here is what Major P.F., an officer of the General Staff at the 2nd Shock Army, reported. Khamov:

"The attack of the breakthrough group, planned on the night of June 24, together with the eastern group, was not successful. In the middle of the day, the enemy resumed attacks on the entire front, having initially carried out strong artillery and air preparation, broke through our defenses on the Kerest River and began advancing in groups along the narrow-gauge railway (crammed with echelons with equipment) and a log road

184

(clogged with vehicles, artillery).

"June 24, 1942 00.45. There is no gap, there is nowhere to evacuate the wounded - you are being misled ... I ask for your intervention. - This is the text of Vlasov's penultimate radiogram.

On the morning of June 24, enemy machine gunners broke through to the army headquarters, and all command was transferred to the command post of the 57th rifle brigade, then to the 46th rifle division. The Military Council decided, at nightfall, to break the ring at all costs and get out of the encirclement. The army headquarters joined the breakthrough group in the sector of the 382nd and 305th rifle divisions.

The leadership of the cover units was entrusted to the deputy commander of the army, Major General P.F. Alferyev, who, from the randomly retreating units of the 327th, 267th rifle divisions, the 23rd brigade and partly the 19th guards division, tried to organize defense from the west. Property, equipment, documents were destroyed. At 19.45 the last radiogram went to the front headquarters.

At 2300, units of the 382nd Infantry Division, under heavy mortar and machine-gun fire from the enemy, began an offensive to the east, north of the narrow-gauge railway. At midnight, the army headquarters began to move. At the head of the column were two platoons of a company of the Special Department, armed with twelve light machine guns, and a platoon of employees of the Special Department of the NKVD with machine guns. They moved further: the head of the Special Department A.G. Shashkov, Military Council, departments of the army headquarters. A platoon of a company of the Special Department brought up the rear. With a hurricane of fire from all types of weapons, the Nempas repulsed the attack. By the morning of June 25, the battle formations of the army were dismembered, command and control was lost.

State Security Captain Kolesnikov reported "upstairs": "From June 22, 1942 to June 25, 1942, no one left the 2nd UA."

Meretskov and Vasilevsky on this occasion compiled a summary for the General Staff, in which they stated:

"On June 25, by 3:15 a.m., by a coordinated strike by the 2nd and 59th Army, the enemy's defenses in the corridor were broken, and from 1:00 a.m., units of the 2nd Army began to leave."

This corridor consisted of four kilometers of narrow (250-300 m) strips of land and marsh along the railroad, shot through. Exhausted, hungry, dying on the move people, almost incapable of resistance, were overcoming these kilometers on foot, somewhere crawling, under artillery and mortar fire of the enemy, gathering all their strength simply to make one more step to the east. In some places, German machine guns shot them almost like in a shooting gallery. The river Polist was filled to the banks with corpses, the living crawled over the bodies of the dead.

Some 1) fighters and command staff managed to crawl. In the language of the general

185

and meant that "the enemy's defense is broken." Here is how the 59th Rifle Brigade "broke down the defense" in the description of the former artillery platoon commander I. I. Elohovsky:

"The departure began on the 24th at one in the morning. Shouts were heard: "Oh, die, so die, guys! Vpere-o-od!!!> The crowd surged along the narrow gauge railway. Valka jumped side by side with me. I stumbled, fell, and an avalanche of people carried me further ... Many were swept away by the unrestrained crowd. I know that the rivers were on the way - Glushitsa, Polist. Only I don't remember the water: only slippery human bodies under my feet. I went through the whole war, but I have never seen such a massacre anywhere else. And no free "corridor": the Germans here and there - from all sides. And you run and shoot anywhere on the go. Few remained alive ... 32 people left the 59th brigade that day.

And here is how the sisters "came out" from the medical unit:

"Finally found a way. Oh my god, what a ride! Knee-deep liquid mud, a broken narrow-gauge railway all around, everything was strewn with dead bodies, machine guns, various things, even gramophones were lying in the mud. The exit has begun. Everywhere people fell, wounded appeared, at first we tried to carry them. Then we got into such hell that it is difficult to describe in words. Everything rattled, burned, tracer bullets rushed. It seemed like the end of the world had come. It was impossible to raise their heads, they crawled up to their necks in the mud in a plastunsky way, and a choral monotonous was heard from the bushes: "Rus, surrender, Rus, glory ..." Those with whom they experienced all the horror of the environment were dying before our eyes. The living crawled, each hoping to survive, led only 18-19 years behind them.

Meretskov, a prominent "specialist in corridors", did not fail to emphasize his merit:

"Everyone moving in the direction of the narrow-gauge railway left the encirclement, although the losses from mortar and machine-gun fire were generally large (!)".

Subtle observation: who did not die, he survived.

Tens of thousands of soldiers and commanders, the headquarters of the agonizing army remained on a patch of swamps measuring 2 by 2 kilometers near Novaya Kerest, being subjected to devastating enemy fire from all sides. Been here for over a month now.

old men, women and children driven from the villages. Here is what L.E. recalls. Borisova, a resident of the village of Finev Lug:

"From the explosions, entire platforms with people in the air took off. Many inhabitants were killed. The neighbor was wounded, his mother's chest was torn off. Once, after the bombing, I see: a wounded woman, both arms are torn off, and she is crawling into the bunker - there are children there. In the morning I looked in - both the mother and the two boys were dead ... We dangled through the forest, dangled, but we never reached Myasny Bor. Tumanov (the former chief of police from Rogavka) walked around everyone and said that there was no way to get through: the Germans blocked the passage. Ordered to go home. We returned
v
Finevka - not a single whole scrap, all were burned.

In the middle of the day on June 25, the Army Military Council decided to break the remaining units into small groups and leave the encirclement on their own. On

186

with this, the organized actions of the 2nd shock army ended. But its remnants, in groups and singly, still tried to break through to their own. In total, from June 20 to June 29, about 7 thousand people went out along the "Meretskov corridors", about half of them were injured. According to Vasilevsky, this is a "significant part of the army", which only a month ago numbered more than 50 thousand fighters. As of July 1, according to the General Staff, 9600 people got out (creeped out) from the units of the 2nd shock army. Those who escaped from the Valley of Death were met by doctors and quartermasters, who tried to treat and feed them. Some, because of weakness, could not eat, others pounced on food and died right there. Meanwhile, the Special Departments took care of "strengthening KGB measures" in order to identify agents "recruited by the Abwehr" in the forests and swamps from among these goons.

In Malaya Vishera and in Moscow, they were anxiously waiting for the exit of Vlasov and the army headquarters, but almost none of them managed to escape. Army intelligence officer A. Rogov broke through the narrow-gauge railway to Myasny Bor. Near the Veretinsky Mokh swamp, the partisans of the Luga detachment discovered the chief of communications of the army, Major General A.A. Afanasyev with four boyes.

A special detachment of Kositsyn was sent for the army commander, who did not come back. The intelligence department of the front threw eight search groups into the German rear. The area where the army died was combed by partisans. The Leningrad headquarters of the partisan movement exchanged radiograms with them daily:

"It is a great honor to find and help Vlasov. Radio every three hours. I am sending you an order from the Headquarters of the Supreme Command to deliver Vlasov, Afanasiev, Vinogradov by plane, which will be served at your request ...).

To carry out this task, Stalin ordered Volkhovsky to "supplied all aviation"

front!

The enemy also actively searched. Flyers with a portrait of Vlasov, thus, from the Pravda newspaper, were scattered by the Germans over the villages, promising a large reward for helping to capture the army commander. But General Vlasov disappeared ...

On June 28, on the day of the start of Operation Blau, the summer offensive of the Wehrmacht on the southern sector of the Eastern Front, Hitler was informed of the victorious end of the Volkhov battle. He was informed that 649 guns, 171 tanks and 32,759 Soviet soldiers had been captured. Among them were thousands of wounded, as well as 793 medical workers (out of 831 on the list), headed by the chief medical officer, military doctor of the 1st rank K.K. Boborykin. The commander of the 327th rifle division, General Antyufeev, the commander of the 57th rifle brigade, Major I. Evstifeev, and the correspondent of the newspaper Courage, senior political instructor Musa Jalil* were captured.

* The author of the Mopbit Notebook, credited 8 traitors to the Motherland, and 8 in 1956 posthumously awarded the star of the Hero of the Soviet Union.

Goebbels declared victory. The head of the Sovinformburo, Lieutenant General Alexander Shcherbakov (1901-1945), in a radio speech on June 29, indignantly denied "another fake of the Nazi scribblers." He reported that the 2nd

187

the shock army "withdrew to a pre-prepared line", the enemy units that broke through on its communications were "destroyed for the most part", the Germans lost at least 30 thousand people killed alone, our units - up to 10 thousand killed and about 10 thousand missing.

Halder wrote in his diary:

"On the front of Army Group North, the Volkhov grouping can be considered as finally liquidated."

On June 30, Hitler promoted Georg von Küchler to Field Marshal General. Three days later, Georg Lindemann was promoted to colonel general.

On July 12, in the village of Tukhovezhi, Oredezhsy District, General A.A. Vlasov surrendered to a German patrol under the command of Captain von Schwerltnr. At that moment, only the cook-instructor of the military department M.I. was with the commander. Voronova is another TJ (field wife). The next day, Vlasov was interrogated at Lindemann's headquarters. The German information bureau transmitted a message about the capture of a major Russian general behind the Volkhov.

The Soviet leadership continued to search for 17 July. But on the 20th, over the swamps, where heaps of encircled men were hiding, German planes began to scatter leaflets with a photograph of the captured Vlasov and calls to follow him.

example.

Nothing was yet known about the behavior of the general in captivity, the first leaflet signed by him had not yet come out, only six months later the famous "Smolensk Appeal" of the Russian Committee would be published, calling on the Russian people to rise up to fight against Bolshevism, Stalin and his clique, together with the National Socialist Germany of Adolf Hitler. But already at the end of July, the Red Army men began to be told on political information that General Vlasov, having received an order from the command, did nothing to fulfill it, and surrendered along with the army.

On March 3, 1943, the occupation newspapers published Vlasov's famous open letter "Why I took the path of fighting Bolshevism." It stated in particular:

"I was appointed deputy commander of the Volkhov Front and commander of the 2nd shock army. Perhaps, Stalin's disdain for the life of the Russian people has never had such an effect as in the practice of the 2nd shock army. The management of this army was centralized and concentrated in the hands of the General Staff. No one knew about her actual position and was not interested in him. One order of command contradicted another. The army was doomed to certain death.

The fighters and the commander for weeks received 100 and even 50 grams of crackers a day. They swelled from hunger, and many could no longer move through the swamps, where

188

army immediate leadership of the High Command. But everyone continued to fight selflessly. Russian people died heroes. But for what? What did they sacrifice their lives for? What did they have to die for?

After that, it was necessary to give a worthy rebuff to the vile traitor and to understand the problem more deeply. In July 1943, the newspaper Za Pobeda! published on behalf of the Main Political Directorate:

"Hitler's spy Vlasov, on the instructions of the Germans, led parts of our Second Shock Army into the environment, killed many Soviet people, and he himself ran over to his German masters."

First, the death of the 2nd shock army was blamed on Vlasov, and then the failure of the entire strategic operation to break the blockade of Leningrad. Greyhound agitators and mediocre generals gladly seized on this version, creatively developed it. Say, Vlasov "was born into a kulak family, graduated from a theological seminary, crept into the party by fraudulent means, rose to the rank of general on the instructions of German intelligence, gave the enemy the secret plans of the Soviet command, opened the front and "ran over to the owners" along with the army, which formed the core of the Vlasov ROA.

*
Vlasov served in the 6th Red Army from the age of 19 (since 1920). Commanded in the Civil War

platoon, then company. In 1929 he graduated from the courses "Shot", 8 1935 - one course of the Frunze Military Academy. From 1937 to 1942 successively commanded a rifle regiment, a division, a mechanized corps, the 37th, 20th and 2nd Shock armies.

This explanation suited everyone: Meretskov and Khozin, Vasilevsky and Voroshilov, the Korkins and the Shvagirevs, and most importantly, Comrade Stalin personally. But all the fighters and commanders of the 2nd shock army of the first formation were stuck for decades with the stigma - "Vlasovite". The myth was cultivated for almost half a century, until the very collapse of the USSR, and was deeply rooted in the mass consciousness. Veterans of the battles for Myasnaya Bor and Spasskaya Polist were embarrassed to admit that they served, but ... we know, we know, in the same "Vlasov army".

The Soviet government and the native Politburo committed another meanness towards the citizens who defended them, trampling both the dead and the survivors into the mud - in order to maintain the illusion of their own infallibility. And it was not Vlasov who committed this betrayal. In 1992, a veteran of the 2nd shock army G.A. Stetsenko wrote to the military commissar of the Gatchina region:

"Are we all, living and dead, to blame for the fact that General Vlasov surrendered to the Germans alive? I was there until the last day and I know that Vlasov did not surrender any army. I also know that none of us, who were captured by the Nazis, went there voluntarily. And what is our fault that they took us to the swamp, perishing from hunger and wounds?

Traitors did not suffer and die in German camps behind barbed wire - they settled better. Hungry, destitute people on beds of bedbugs did not betray anyone. On the outskirts of Vyra, ditches are overgrown with thick grass, where thousands of innocently tortured people are buried. Is it only in Vyra? And in Mezjno, Volosovo, Luga? Is it right that on thousands of graves, where the earth swayed for several days

189

(after all, they threw people still alive there), and there are no small plaques reminiscent of the fact that these people lived on earth ?. When I write all this, it seems to me that I am writing from the other world. Will anyone hear it?"

Of course, the former private of the 22nd separate rifle brigade did not wait for an answer.

Only on January 24, 1995, Russian President B.M. Yeltsin signed a decree that fully rehabilitated all former prisoners of war and repatriates. In other words, the authorities FORGIVE the innocent. Asking for forgiveness herself had never been such a habit. Moreover, in Russia it is always successive when it comes to achievements or victories, and always new, not responsible for anything when it comes to meanness towards one's own or other peoples.

Meretskov, who directly supervised it, devoted only one paragraph (!) to the consideration of the results of the Lyuban operation, in his book of memoirs, limiting himself to the standard set of arguments of the defeated Soviet commanders:

- a) the operation "was of great importance" (I wonder which one?);
- 6) "our troops thwarted the offensive of Army Group North" (was it going to attack?);
- c) "pulled over more than 15 divisions" (having under their command 48 settlement divisions!);
- d) inflicted "significant losses" on the enemy (you can't say anything, a "worthy result" of a strategic operation).

The permanent commander of the Volkhov Front (the only case in Stalin's personnel policy when the front was commanded by the same person for more than two years from the moment of its creation until disbandment) gave much more space to the psychoanalysis of Vlasov's personality, looking for and finding in it an innate pathology - an "embryo" of treason:

"The question arises: how did it happen that Vlasov turned out to be a traitor? The answer, it seems to me, can only be given one. Vlasov was an unprincipled careerist. His behavior before that could well be considered a disguise, behind which was hiding indifference to his homeland. His membership in the Communist Party is nothing more than a path to high positions. His actions at the front, for example, in the 1941 goal near Kiev and Moscow, are an attempt to distinguish himself in order to demonstrate professional abilities and get out as soon as possible.

The diagnosis made by the marshal was soon referred to by other "psychoanalysts", not so venerable, of a lower rank - Generals I.S. Katyshev, K.F. Kalashnikov and others. Even if you die, you can't say better: Vlasov "demonstrated professional abilities from unprincipled careerism."

190

Here is the pearl!

Meanwhile, Meretskov himself and his army commanders did not shine at all in the Luban operation. The question naturally arises: did they not show professional abilities out of principle, so that they would not be considered careerists?

You don't have to ask about party membership - they all walked along the same "path". Marxism freed all of them from the "chimera of conscience" and "so-called morality."

Major Kuzin, trying to somehow rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the special officers, gave the former boss the most negative characterization:

"Vlasov is very proud, he believed that only he was capable and could work, and he called the rest of the commanders of the military formations loafers and parasites ... Vlasov was very generous with state funds to spend on his personal needs and economical on his personal ones ... To Vlasov's subordinates very demanding, and sometimes even cruel, this created the appearance that he was disciplined, but

The contradiction to all this is his behavior towards superiors, superior to him."

For me, this is a typical portrait of the vast majority and the Reds

generals, and the nomenklatura (party and Soviet officials), and in general all the "leaders" of the country where suffrage came from the age of sixteen, and sentenced to death from fourteen, to imprisonment - from twelve. In exactly the same words, colleagues characterize G.K. Zhukov and A.I. Eremenko, M.V. Zakharov and V.N. Gordova, V.D. Sokolovsky and F.I. Kuznetsova, I.I. Fedyuninsky and P.S. [Shpennikov, many, many others.

Writer Nikolai Konyaev noted:

"The goal was great. To liberate Leningrad, to save many hundreds of thousands of people from starvation ... The commander who did this on January 8, 1942, would on native hero. But on January 8, forty-second, this commander had to be a folk hero.

Alas... Neither Kirill Afanasyevich Meretskov, nor Mikhail Semenovich Khozin, nor Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov were clearly suitable for this role. They were not able to rise above the worries about their own careers, and as a result, something happened to them that always happens to people who are placed on the crest of events and are not able to reverse those chenie".

The authors of Soviet military-historical studies, artificially separating the offensive and defensive phases of the Luban operation, call it "not fully completed." Say, the Germans were a little under-encircled and the operation ended there. Meanwhile, the battle for the Volkhov had a very concrete "complete completion": the defeat of the Soviet troops and the destruction of half of the Volkhov Front.

At the same time, some of these historians, who apparently received shrapnel and bullet wounds in the head on the battlefields, had the remnants of their minds to be proud of an amazing achievement in military art:

"Soviet troops seized the initiative and forced the enemy's 18th Army to fight defensive battles!"

For comparison, here is an analysis of the operation made by an ordinary soldier of the 839th artillery regiment:

"Why did the Hitlerite command not go for the direct physical destruction of the army, but pulled, pulled, pulled? The Germans fought skillfully, intelligently, using the miscalculations of our command. And the mediocrity of our highest echelon was obvious: the Stavka, headed by Stalin, destroyed, without hesitation, its own troops, as if they did not consist of

from lu

dey, and from insects. "Forward! No step back!" What will come of it and at what cost?

doesn't matter.

So it turned out that the Germans exterminated Russian units in the Novgorod forests with small forces of troops and equipment, outnumbering several times. The "Father of All Nations" hoped to win the winter offensive at the expense of frosts and was cruelly mistaken.

But, when spring came, and with it mudslides, why didn't they come to their senses then? The swamps opened up - not a single car will pass. There would be to come to their senses and turn the troops back, for where there is! Again

they drove forward, they sang to the cherished - to Luban "

Even a simple peasant woman, who watched the assault on her native village from the cellar, saw the obvious - the illiteracy and stupidity of the Soviet military leaders, who killed soldiers with the callousness of true Bolsheviks:

"A lot of people died then. How, for example, did they take Finevka? One party goes on the attack - they will kill. Others will be sent - and those will be laid down. In the "forehead" nothing worked. They took the village and the station only when they took a detour - from the direction of Keresti. The Germans are finally on the run...

In strategic terms, the incompetently conducted Luban operation (or otherwise, magnificently failed), which absorbed huge military resources, led to the failure of the Stalin-Zhukov plan to defeat the Army Group Center. This is the opinion of the enemy:

"The fact that the German front on the Volkhov attracted very significant forces to itself, of course, significantly facilitated the position of the German central group of forces, which was conducting heavy battles and repeatedly broken through. The forces that the Soviet command put into use during its offensive on the Volkhov could have a significant impact on the outcome of the operation of the German Army Group Center.

Stalin made the same mistake as Hitler - he wanted to attack everywhere and therefore did not achieve a decisive victory anywhere.

At the beginning of July 1942, the 2nd Shock Army, consisting of seven divisions, six brigades and one battalion, had only 10,898 soldiers "out of encirclement". So, 292 people remained from the 327th rifle division, 159 from the 59th separate rifle brigade, 99 from the 57th brigade, and the 19th guards division consisted of 136 fighters. The entire 46th Rifle Division fit in the back of one truck; The 92nd Division, which had lost its Battle Banner, was disbanded, as was the 13th Cavalry Corps.

The divisional deputy commander, Major General P.F., was killed in the battle. Alferyev, commissioner I.V. Zuev (according to another version, he shot himself), the chief of staff of the army P.S. Vinogradov, who never tried on the shoulder straps of a major general, division commanders Colonels A.N. Popov, F.E. Black, S.I. Bulanov, A.N. Larichev. Not wanting to surrender, the head of the Special Department, A.G., committed suicide. Shashkov, head of the political department I.P. Garus, a number of other commanders and political workers. Entire units and staffs in full force perished in the cauldron. Since the establishment of a complete blockade, the army has lost more than 43 thousand people, of which 37.5 thousand are irretrievable.

General N.K., who was so successfully "sick" and just as timely "healed", again took command of the 2nd shock. Klykov (who lived, God forbid everyone, to eighty years).

The total losses of the three armies of the Volkhov Front during the "operation to withdraw the 2nd shock army from the encirclement", which ended on July 10, 1942, amounted to almost 95 thousand people - all of them were attributed to Vlasov. In general, the Luban adventure cost the Red Army 403 thousand killed and wounded. Irrevocably - 150 thousand people.

At the same time, the losses of the 54th and 4th armies, all this time fighting for Pogostye, which Hitler ordered to return, and from Kirishi, which the Fuhrer, who believed that the defense of this village costs too much German blood, proposed to evacuate, were taken into account only until April inclusive - in accordance with the cunning "chronology" established by "historians in uniform".

Chapter 9

(July - October 1942)

The situation in Leningrad in the summer of 1942 could be called relatively normal, as far as it is possible for any front-line city.

The troops of the Army Group "North" did not have the opportunity for active combat operations in the near future and sat on the defensive. All German strategic reserves and marching reinforcements were transferred to the south to participate in the "main operation", the divisions of the von Kuehler group were replenished "during

second line."

There was a silence on the Karelian Isthmus that irritated our active generals, the opposing sides tried not to disturb each other once again. Marshal-artilleryman G.F. Odintsov:

"Continuing to get acquainted with the artillery units of the front, I visited the 23rd Army, commanded by Major General A. I. Cherepanov ... I was struck by the silence hovering in the band of this army. On the southern wing of our front, artillery was firing around the clock, mortars were fired, machine-gun chatter was heard, but here it was as if there was no war. With the head of the artillery of the army, Colonel I.M. Pyadusov went around our entire front line near Belostrov and did not hear a single shot. "Have you concluded a truce with the enemy, Comrade Pyadusov?" - I reproach the charter. "We can't let him live in peace!"

The well-thought-out and well-prepared summer navigation, opened on May 25, was a success. The volume of transportation through Lake Ladoga was already 7,000 tons of cargo and up to 10,000 people per day. It was even possible to organize the movement of the railway ferry. In total, for the navigation of 1942, the city received more than 790 thousand tons of cargo, half of which was food. Significant reserves were created not only in Leningrad, but also in Kronstadt, Oranienbaum, on the islands of the Gulf of Finland.

Almost 300,000 servicemen, 202 tanks, and 631 guns arrived to replenish the Leningrad Front and the Baltic Fleet. 448 thousand inhabitants were evacuated. In July, compared with January, the death rate of the population decreased by 5.5 times and amounted to 17,695 people, in August it decreased by another 2 times. The NKVD department stopped recording sudden deaths on the streets.

The problem of hunger was removed. Leningrad residents began to receive rationed products on a par with residents of other cities in the country. Soldiers on the front line were entitled to 800 grams of bread, lunch and hot welding for breakfast.

Along the bottom of Ladoga, between the eastern and western shores of the Shlisselburg Bay, it was possible to lay a pipeline through which 300-400 tons of fuel were delivered to the city daily. He entered service on June 18 and was practically invulnerable to the enemy. Important for further improvement

194

Leningrad, the laying of an underwater electric cable from the Volkhovskaya hydroelectric power station began. City enterprises produced machine guns, heavy and light machine guns, cannons, tanks, combat boats, shells, mines - about 100 types of military products in total.

But Leningrad still remained in the blockade, and with it the continuously replenished troops of the 42nd, 55th, 23rd armies, Primorsky and Neva operational groups. Units of the 79th fortified region arrived from the Arkhangelsk Military District and took up defensive positions in the zone of the 42nd Army; near Kolpino,

behind the 55th Army, the newly formed 14th fortified area dug in.

The armored forces of the front in July had four brigades: 1st, 61st, 152nd and 220th, two heavy breakthrough tank regiments (31st and 41st), equipped with British vehicles, and three separate tank battalions (86, 118, 287). In addition, there were front-line training units: the 12th tank regiment, training courses for tank commanders. There were over 420 tanks in combat strength, about 40 in training units. The number of guns and mortars, compared with September 1941, doubled. The air forces of the front and the KBF in mid-July had 340

aircraft.

As of August 1, 1942, the Volkhov Front included 33 rifle divisions, 11 rifle divisions, 1 airborne division, 7 tank brigades, 1 fortified area, 4 separate tank battalions, 28 separate artillery regiments and 6 rocket mortar regiments. 14th Air Army under the command of Major General I.P. Zhuravlev, created on the basis of the front-line Air Force, had 116 combat aircraft.

In the German Army Group North, there were 45 divisions, including 3 tank and 4 motorized. In connection with the shortage of manpower that began to affect the Reich, all the infantry divisions of the group were reduced by one third compared to the regular strength: instead of nine, they now had six infantry battalions.

A new offensive operation began to plan almost immediately. Chief engineer of the front, Colonel-General A.F. Khrenov recalls:

"As soon as the exit was completed, from the encirclement of separate groups of fighters and commanders, they were unable to break through at Myasny Bor, and the Stavka was already in a hurry to prepare a NEW On

step operation".

He confirms that they didn't think about defense for a day, they didn't know how to organize it and didn't intend to:

"To begin with, most of the sections had only a full line of defense, consisting of two trenches (or, rather, from what these trenches replaced). A

the whole

previous experience convinced me that only a defense that has at least two frontiers, the front line and the main line, can be truly stable. But its frontiers that were, did not differ, in my opinion, sufficient reliability.

The basis of such dependency is a system linking all positions by fire interaction. But I saw everywhere separate, each in itself, artillery,

195

machine gun and mortar positions. Such a defense structure turned out to be

untenable in the face of the force of fire and the suddenness of the maneuver of the Nazis. The proximity of the enemy front line threatened that each single firing point without the support of the others could be easily blocked and destroyed.

But this problem did not bother anyone, the red generals were not afraid of the Germans, they did not have time to deal with such "nonsense". Even without that, the Soviet troops did not sit idle for a single day, since the generals were convinced that "defense discourages" the soldier. To prevent this from happening, and also with the aim of "bleeding the enemy", achieving "dispersal of his grouping", creating "favorable conditions" for the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts, they were active in all directions.

So, the 42nd Army of Lieutenant General Ivan Fedorovich Nikolaev (1890-1944), from July 20 to August 26, and the 55th Army of Major General Vladimir Petrovich Svirilov (1897-1963), from July 23 to August 4, attacked the enemy in several sectors in the areas of Uritsk and Kolpino. At the cost of heavy losses, units of the 268th Infantry Division, with the support of the 220th Tank Brigade, managed to liberate Putrolovo and Yam-Izhora.

The 4th Army of Lieutenant General Nikolai Ivanovich Gusev (1897-1962) with the forces of the 311th, 80th, 44th, 310th rifle divisions, the 186th and 195th tank brigades, throughout July and August 1942, advanced on Kirishi, held in shifts by changing battalions of the 11th and 21st Infantry Divisions. In just one day on July 11, 9550 mines and shells were fired at the bridgehead, on July 29 2900 shells were used up. The village itself no longer existed, but the enemy's impregnable position remained a hill with a grove "Vysokaya", dominating the area and blocking the view of the German crossings across the Volkhov, the ruins of a chemical plant, turned into a circular defense unit.

Kirishi became one of the bloodiest places on the Volkhov front; after several days of fighting, only a few active bayonets remained in the battalions. The Germans also suffered heavy losses, called the bridgehead "the second Verdun". Scrap iron, bordering the line of German positions, piled up 170 burned-out Soviet tanks. The Germans led communication passages to them and arranged machine-gun nests under them.

No one has been particularly successful. According to post-war writers, the commanders of the Red Army saw the benefit of this meat grinder in the fact that THEY "kept the Nazis in constant tension", tested the offensive abilities of their troops and "as if rehearsing the breakthrough of the blockade."

Meanwhile L.A. Govorov, the most competent general, the first of the commanders of the Leningrad Front to attend to the real combat training of the troops, issued a devastating order following the results of the Uritsa operation:

"During the operation on Uritsk 29.742 by the command, headquarters and troops of the 42nd

The army again repeated a number of major mistakes in the preparation of the battle, the political support of the battle, the control of the battle and the organization of interaction between the combat arms, which, taken together, led to the failure of the units to fulfill their combat mission.

The Military Council of the Army did not take measures to check the combat control system of the 85th Infantry Division, did not take the necessary measures to eliminate on the spot the errors in control revealed during the battle, did not show the necessary exactingness, and did practically nothing to fulfill the assigned task by the division. The military council allowed itself to be deceived during the entire battle, not only not taking measures to expose the false reports, but not even catching the obvious implausibility and contradictions in the reports of the executors.

Not knowing the situation, the Military Council of the Army took the path of presenting false, unverified reports to the Military Council of the Front on the successful completion of the assigned combat mission by the 85th Rifle Division, at a time when the division had not even begun to carry it out.

The command of the 85th Rifle Division, 59th and 109th Rifle Regiments showed cowardice, controlling the battle from dugouts and not having observation posts in which the field of activity of their troops could be seen. There were no commanders and political workers in the division who would have been able to reveal in time the non-compliance with the combat order and by personal example on the battlefield to captivate units and subunits to complete the assigned task.

I ORDER:

Reprimand the Military Council of the 42nd Army - Lieutenant General Nikolaev and Brigadier Commissar Panyushkin for the second time mistakes made in the leadership of the operation, as a result of which the troops did not fulfill their tasks.

The persons of the command and political staff of the 85th Rifle Division, who were the main culprits for the failure to fulfill the combat mission, should be removed from their posts, deprived or demoted in military ranks, deprived of orders and medals and sent to the front-line penal battalion.

The junior command and rank and file, who showed cowardice on the battlefield, be removed from the units and sent to the army penal company.

At the same time, preparations were underway for a new operation to break the blockade, in which the forces of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts were to take part in cooperation with the Baltic Fleet. A ledge south of Lake Ladoga that separated the Soviet fronts was chosen as a combat area. The general idea was to defeat the enemy's Mgin'sk-Sinyavino grouping with counter strikes over the shortest distance and lift the blockade of Leningrad.

On this path, the Soviet troops had to overcome a well-prepared and heavily fortified defense with a large number of natural and artificial obstacles. For eleven months, the Germans applied

lived a lot of effort to make the ledge impregnable. Along all natural boundaries, along rivers and lakes, ravines and marshes, along heights and in workers' settlements, they created defensive positions with many centers of resistance and strongholds, with artillery and mortar batteries. The personnel of the garrisons were housed in strong dugouts, were provided with reliable communications, the front line was covered by minefields and barbed wire in several rows.

It was impossible to dig trenches in the swampy soil, so the Nemps, who constantly thought not only about conquering new territories, but also about holding the captured ones, built fences. Two rows of stakes were driven into the ground, pulled together with wire. The stakes were braided with branches and branches of trees, and the space between them was filled with logs and wet earth. The result was a wall 2-2.5 meters high and of the same thickness. The land was taken from the side of the enemy, thereby creating a deep ditch filled with swamp water before the fortification. The fence had firing points and loopholes for shooting.

As the experience of military operations showed, it turned out to be extremely difficult to overcome such an obstacle. Usually, sappers crawled up to the fence, placed a powerful charge under it, and with an explosion made a passage into which the infantry rushed. Sometimes a breach was punched by artillery advanced for direct fire. Breaking the fence has always required great effort, costing a lot of blood. In addition, as a rule, one more fence, disguised firing points and cut-off positions were found behind it. But in the summer of 1942, Soviet military engineers were skeptical about such a "medieval", moreover, very laborious fortification "design".

In addition, the area itself here, according to Meretskov's definition, was "extremely unsuitable" for offensive operations. Extensive peat extraction stretches from the coast of Ladoga to Sinyavino, and to the south, 1.5-2 kilometers, continuous impenetrable forests with swampy areas and swamps begin. Almost the only dry place is the limestone Sinyavino Heights, which rise 10-15 meters above the surrounding flat plain. Here was located the key position of the enemy with all-round defense, with a view and shelling for several kilometers. All passable areas were kept under fire by bunkers, artillery batteries, they were densely mined. It is hard to imagine better conditions for a side forced to defend itself with small forces.

Manstein did not fail to note in his memoirs: "We would never have organized a breakthrough on such terrain." In response to this, Meretskov only shrugged his hands:

"Of course, the peat bogs north of Sinyavino and continuous forests south of it presented great difficulties, especially when using heavy weapons and powerful equipment. But where can you find a place better than this?"

In fact, the idea of a sudden blow to overcome some 16 kilometers separating the two Soviet fronts looked very tempting. The red generals assumed "with luck" to reach the Neva in two or three days. The calculation was made on tactical and operational surprise, on the fact that the Germans fighting

“according to the rules”, such “stupidity” is not expected from the enemy.

Fulfilling the instructions of the Headquarters, the commander of the Leningrad Front, General L.A. Govorov decided to deliver two strikes by the forces of the 55th Army and the Neva Operational Group: one in the direction of Tosno, the other in the direction of Sinyavino, in order to connect with the troops of the Volkhov Front. The remaining parts of the front were to conduct active offensive operations in the Uritsky and Staropanovsky directions, not allowing the Germans to maneuver forces.

The ships of the Baltic Fleet were to land troops on the opposite bank of the Neva and Tosno, seize bridges and crossings, ensure the crossing of water lines by strike groups and the development of the offensive. The aviation of the front consisted of 185 serviceable aircraft, the Baltic Fleet - 187.

Sinyavino offensive operation (August - September 1942)

The decision of the commander of the Volkhov Front was to break through the enemy defenses on the 15-kilometer section between Gontovaya Lipka and Voronovo, bypassing Sinyavino from the south, go to the Neva in the Otradnoye area, join with the Leningrad Front and together with it defeat the Mgin'skaya enemy grouping.

In the area of the impending breakthrough, a 150,000th fist was assembled from the formations of the 8th army of General Starikov (128, 265, 11, 286, 327th rifle, 3, 19, 24th guards divisions, 1st separate mountain rifle, 16th

1 tank brigade, 107th, 500th, 502nd, 503rd, 507th tank battalions); 4th Guards Rifle Corps (259th Rifle Division, 22nd, 23rd, 32nd, 33rd, 57th, 137th, 140th Rifle Brigades) and the 2nd Shock Army of General Klykov (191st and 374th Rifle Divisions) built in three echelons. The essence of the idea was to break through to the Neva at a high pace before

German reinforcements arrived from other sectors.

The support of the first echelon was to be carried out by a powerful artillery grouping, consisting of 12 artillery and 9 mortar regiments, 4 separate mortar battalions, 3 guards mortar regiments M 13 and 7 guards mortar divisions M-30. Taking into account the given funds, the 8th Army had 1657 guns and mortars and about 150 tanks.

In the Volkhov area, the front commander concentrated a strong reserve consisting of five rifle divisions and one rifle brigade. In the forest near the Voybokalo station, an auxiliary command post was equipped, where Meretskov's headquarters moved. In total, 14 rifle divisions, 7 rifle and 6 tank brigades, 7 separate tank battalions were allocated for a breakthrough to Leningrad. The plan also provided for the delivery of auxiliary strikes in the zones of action of the remaining armies - the 54th, 4th, 59th and 52nd.

The 18th Army of General Lindemann in mid-August included 25 divisions, including one tank, one mountain rifle and three security divisions, the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade and the SS legion "Norway". The defense of the entire perimeter of the Shlisselburg ledge was carried out by the 26th Army Corps (227th and 223rd Infantry Divisions and two security regiments); from the middle reaches of the Neva to Uritsk

199

Leningrad was surrounded by the 50th Army Corps (SS police division, 121st and 215th infantry divisions, SS brigade); The Oranienbaum bridgehead was blocked by units of the 58th and 225th divisions.

Around Pogostya and Kirishi, the 28th Corps - 96th, 217th, 93rd, 11th, 21st and 269th Infantry Divisions. From the Gruzino bridgehead to Novgorod, parallel to the highway, the 1st and 38th army corps held the defense, they included 61, 1, 291, 254, 212 infantry divisions. The 12th Panzer and 5th Mountain Rifle Divisions were in reserve.

The Spaniards from Novgorod relocated to the Tosno region.

In early August, the offensive plan was approved by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. The front received a large number of marching companies, tanks, artillery of great and special power, rocket-propelled mortars, shells and logistical equipment, including 20,000 machine guns on the personal instructions of Stalin. Within a month, the number of aircraft in the 14th Air Army was increased to 330 aircraft.

To create a strike force in the direction of the main attack, the headquarters of the Volkhov Front had to regroup 13 rifle divisions and 6 tank brigades, over 20 artillery regiments, a significant number of special units and subunits - in an extremely limited road network and in a traditionally short time. To ensure the secrecy of the transfer of forces to the right wing of the front, a number of masking and misinforming measures were carried out. For example, part of the troops, under the pretext of being sent to Stalingrad, was transported in trains from Malaya Vishera to Tikhvin by a roundabout route through Moscow, Vologda and Cherepovets. At the same time, preparations for a major operation in the Novgorod region were simulated. All orders were given orally and only in person to members of the military councils of the armies and commanders of the corps, who were called directly to the front headquarters for this.

Meretskov "classified" everything so much that even many years later, describing the preparations for the Sinyavino operation carried out under his direct supervision, he managed not to say a word about the forces he had and the forces of the enemy, and considering the course of the battle, he did not remember any of his divisions! What are the memoirs of the commander worth, in which there is not a single specific figure, except for the German losses sucked out of the finger and no conclusions, except for the thoughtful "what happened, it happened"!

A good reason in favor of the speedy conduct of the offensive operation, Soviet "historians in uniform" call the need for a preemptive strike in order to disrupt the new assault on Leningrad that the Germans were preparing. The poor fellows are completely confused and it is already completely incomprehensible: what did the Soviet Headquarters want after all: "break through the blockade" or "break the assault"? This idea was popularized again by the loser

Meretskov battle:

"The difficult Lyuban operation has just ended, which pulled part of the Nazi troops from Leningrad. The soldiers are tired. However, it was impossible to flash, because
hitle

Rovo command was preparing for a decisive assault.

200

In general, whatever it is, whatever, you still had to hurry.

Indeed, the Fuhrer of the German nation, having made sure that it was not possible to starve out the Leningraders by starvation and bombardment, was inclined to believe that the work begun in September 1941 should be completed and "go through the remaining ten kilometers." However, he decided to postpone it in order to seize Baku oil, establish contact with Turkey and break through to the Middle East.

The summer campaign of 1942 was extremely successful for the Wehrmacht. In less than a month, German troops defeated the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern fronts, advanced 400 kilometers in the main directions, captured the Donbass, Rostov, Sevastopol, launched an offensive in the bend of the Don towards Stalingrad. In the battles in the south, the Red Army lost 570,000 servicemen, 2,436 tanks, almost 14,000 guns and mortars.

Things were going so well that Hitler, with his own hands, began to break the plan of Operation Blau, thought out to the smallest detail. Imagining that the Russians had brought the last reserves into battle and were no longer capable of providing serious resistance, the Fuhrer decided to speed up the events and, instead of the envisaged successive operations - to capture first Stalingrad, then the Caucasus - he ordered two simultaneous offensives in divergent directions.

The 11th Army of Manstein, released after the capture of the Crimea (who received the rank of Field Marshal for Sevastopol), which, according to the original plan, was supposed to be transferred across the Kerch against to the Taman Peninsula, was decided to be used near Leningrad. On July 19, the General Staff of the Ground Forces informed the command of Army Group North:

"At present, there are considerations ... instead of an offensive on the front of the Kronstadt Bay, launch an offensive against Leningrad with the task of capturing the city, establishing contact with the Finns north of Leningrad, and thereby turning off the Baltic Fleet."

The final decision of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Adolf Hitler, was issued by Directive No. 45 of July 23, 1942:

"Army Group North" to prepare the capture of Leningrad by the beginning of September. The operation is codenamed Feuerzauber (later Nordlicht). To do this, transfer to the army group five divisions of the 11 Army along with heavy artillery

artillery and artillery of special power, as well as other necessary parts of the reserve of the main command.

And so it happened that on August 12, Manstein, who returned to the Crimea from vacation, found out that all the schedules developed by his headquarters for crossing the Kerch Strait could be thrown into the trash. By the way, the troops of the 11th German Army from mid-July "rested from the hardships they endured" and received awards.

On August 23, at the Fuhrer's headquarters in Vinnitsa, a meeting was held dedicated to the preparation of the attack on Leningrad, to which the commander of the group arrived

201

Army "North" Field Marshal Kühler. Hitler confirmed the task: to establish contact with the Finns, take possession of the city and raze it to the ground.

The organization of the assault was entrusted to Field Marshal Manstein and the headquarters of the 11th Army. Together with them, veterans of the Crimean campaign were to be transferred to the north - the 24th, 132nd, 170th infantry, 28th jaeger divisions and siege artillery. 12 divisions, including the 12-tank division, and the SS brigade, located with the front to the north, passed into submission to the headquarters of the 11 Army; to the headquarters of the 18th Army - formations in the Volkhov sector. To pass tests in combat conditions, the 502nd tank battalion of the latest heavy vehicles T-U \ U1 "Tiger" was sent near Leningrad.

The Germans also made a request through their representative at the Finnish headquarters for the participation of the Finns in the "joint venture" and their transition to active operations on the Karelian Isthmus. The answer was that "Finland's participation in the attack on the city is excluded."

From the direct assault on Leningrad, Manstein immediately refused. By September 1942, a system of fortifications in depth had already been erected around the city. The army defense consisted of two lanes with intermediate lines and cut-off positions. Directly behind them began the intra-city defense system (VOG), which consisted of an outer zone and six city sectors. The outer strip of the VOG was divided into four regions: southern, western, eastern and northern, equipped with field-type fortifications. City sectors were a system of strongholds and included buildings and factory territories prepared for all-round defense.

During the summer and autumn of 1942, Leningraders equipped more than 8100 machine-gun and artillery firing points, built 17 km of barricades, 25 km of anti-tank ditches, 52 km of communications. 175 small-caliber artillery guns were transferred from ships to strengthen the defense of the city, 14 anti-aircraft divisions were involved in firing at ground targets within the city limits. As a result, the territory of Leningrad and the suburbs were turned, in essence, into a continuous fortified area. The VOG included about 10.5 thousand soldiers of military units, almost 3 thousand people from the NKVD troops, more than 2.2 thousand sailors. At the first signal, another 4,000 police officers and up to 10,000 volunteers from work groups were to take their positions. Manstein writes:

"On the basis of observations, it became clear to us that our army should under no circumstances be drawn into combat operations within the city of Leningrad, where our forces would quickly melt away. Hitler's point of view that the city can be forced into surrender by terrorist raids specially designed for this 8th aviation corps, we were as little inclined to share as the experienced commander of this corps, Colonel-General von Richthofen.

Therefore, his plan was to break through the Soviet defenses south of Leningrad and advance to the very outskirts of the city after powerful artillery and air bombardments by the forces of three corps. After that, two corps were to turn to the right, cross the Neva on the move, bypass Leningrad from the east, depriving it of any connection with the mainland, and defeat the council

202

sky troops between the river and Ladoga. The offensive was scheduled for 14 September.

And here is the paradox: Meretskov, having barely managed to inform the reader that "it was impossible to delay", literally on the next page declares:

"Unfortunately, at that time, none of us knew that the German command was preparing an operation on the same days to finally capture Leningrad ... However, the enemy, in turn, did not know anything about the preparation of our offensive. It must be admitted that both sides were able to carry out the preparation of operations covertly, with extensive camouflage measures and skillful misinformation.

The pinnacle of the scientific creativity of the four institutes that wrote the Soviet version of the history of the Second World War (in 12 volumes), as well as the History of the Great Patriotic War (in 5 volumes) was the following "clumsiness": the Soviet Headquarters decided to preempt the enemy's offensive, not having the slightest idea about him .

In order to divert the attention of the enemy and tie down his forces along the entire length of the front line, they were the first to move on to active army operations in other directions. So, in early August, nine divisions of the 59th Army (2, 65, 191, 372, 374, 376, 377, 378, 382) with the support of two tank

brigades, three artillery regiments of the RGK and a regiment of guards mortars went on the offensive from the bridgehead on the western bank of the Volkhov, captured the Dymno stronghold, but soon got stuck near the village of Zvanki. And later, for almost a year and a half, the army of General Korovnikov "fell down and diverted significant enemy forces" - usually three infantry divisions.

On August 15-17, the troops of the 55th Army of the Leningrad Front launched a series of unsuccessful attacks in the valley of the Bolshaya Izhorka River in the direction of the Oktyabrskaya Railway.

At the same time, preparations for the operation on the left flank of the army were being completed. The idea was to use the forces of the 268th Infantry Division of Colonel SI.

Donskoy, with the support of artillery and naval aviation, strike at the enemy defending on the western bank of the Tosna, force the river and capture the village of Ivanovskoye on the opposite bank. The successful implementation of this plan would create favorable conditions for the development of a further offensive on Mga and Sinyavino.

At the mouth of the Tosna, it was planned to land a tactical assault force, which was supposed to seize and hold the railway and highway bridges with a surprise attack until tanks and infantry approached. To participate in the landing battle, special groups of naval artillery and aviation were created, as well as a landing detachment under the command of Captain 2nd Rank A.M. Bogdanovich, which included up to 38 different boats. 280 fighters from the 942nd Infantry Regiment of the Donskoy Division and 50 sailors from the Leningrad Naval Base were allocated to the landing force. "They were issued a ticket" only in one direction, because in case of failure of the 268th Infantry Division, the plan did not provide for a return landing on the boats.

203

Commander of the Baltic Fleet, Admiral V.F. Tributs decided to personally lead the "naval operation" from the command and observation post equipped on the banks of the Neva:

"From here came my orders to the commanders of artillery and aviation to increase the impact on the enemy."

The 55th army of General Sviridov at the turn from Yam-Izhora to Ust-Tosno was opposed by the SS police division under the command of Major General Wünnenberg, with headquarters in the village of Nikolskoye. The reserve of the division consisted of a sapper battalion and two infantry companies. In the area of the forthcoming operation, the 2nd Battalion of the 1st SS Regiment was defending.

On August 19, at 11:00, dozens of Soviet guns hit the German positions. At the same time, long-range batteries and cannons of the ships of the Baltic Fleet paralyzed enemy artillery in Krasny Bor and Otradnoe. A destroyer, gunboats and armored boats fired directly from the Neva. Land and sea pilots delivered a powerful bombing strike. After a 70-minute artillery preparation, following the fire shaft from the Lenspirtstroy plant, the infantry, supported by tanks, rushed to the attack.

At 12 o'clock, a detachment of boats left the village of Kormchino and, under the cover of a smoke screen, unexpectedly for the Germans, landed troops on the eastern coast of Tosna. The paratroopers, having overcome a jerk of 1200 meters, saddled both roads leading to the bridges and began to move towards Ivanovsky. The sappers following with submachine gunners immediately cleared the highway bridge, which the Germans did not have time to blow up. The regiments of the 268th division captured Ust-Tosno and part of the forces crossed over the bridge to the east coast. By 15 o'clock Ivanovskoye was occupied, and the advanced Soviet units reached the Pella station.

However, the offensive did not develop. The enemy, having come to his senses, continuously counterattacked, throwing into battle all the reserves, up to the rear services. The Russians were building up their forces, landing two more waves of troops. But seize

railway bridge and could not move further east.

On the very first day, traditional shortcomings in the organization of the operation affected: the army and navy "led their parties" separately. There was no interaction, because there was no plan of joint actions in nature. After the landing, due to lack of communication, the artillery of the support group was unable to provide him with real assistance in the battles for expanding the bridgehead. The fighters rushed forward, but did not know how to gain a foothold in the recaptured territory, leaving German machine gunners and unsuppressed firing points in the rear and on the flanks. Translator of the 947th Infantry Regiment I.M. Dunaevskaya wrote in her diary:

"The offensive is going on with varying success. Huge losses. And what could be expected when the replenishment arrived just before the operation itself and was thrown into battle almost on the move: it did not participate in the exercises, the commanders did not know the boys, the fighters did not know the commanders and barely knew each other! And yet our pressure is great: the Germans are cowardly, in places they are taken with a bang, but shelling from the right flank, from the railway bridge, from the front and from the rear, from Krasny Bor, dominating over

204

terrain, nullifies our progress. In the meantime, the regimental commissar, senior battalion commissar Ryazanov, "is engaged in personal prevention", that is, he is looking for the guilty in advance, preparing for the upcoming analysis flights."

The Germans firmly defended on both banks of the river south of the Shlisselburg tract and destroyed the highway bridge with artillery and mortar fire, making it impossible to pass to the eastern bank, and with the approach of the battalion of the 151st Infantry Regiment of the 61st Division, they again occupied their trenches in Ust-Tosno, restoring the former leading edge.

The Soviet group that broke through in Ivanovo was the paratroopers of Senior Lieutenant A.E. Kostrubo and the 952nd regiment of Major A.I. Klyukanov - was cut off from the main forces. The Donskoy division lost half of its personnel during the day; in the 947th rifle regiment, thrown back to their original positions, 70% dropped out. Another "patch" was formed - Ivanovsky, which had 600 m along the banks of the Neva to the mouth of the Tosna and 400 m to the railway, another "Valley of Death" appeared - a strip of land between the "concrete" and the railway embankment.

From the western coast, they tried to deliver food and ammunition to the bridgehead, but rare boats reached their goal. The number of defenders quickly dwindled. Reinforcements from the 25th regiment of the 12th Panzer Division, led by Colonel Bayer, arrived at the enemy with the task of returning Ivanovskoye. The Germans admitted that the losses of their two battalions in two days of fierce fighting "were great": 33 people killed, 3 missing, 205 wounded. On August 21, the Bayer battle group launched an offensive from the west and recaptured Ivanovskoye in the middle of the day.

The commander of the 55th Army decided on August 23 to bring into battle the 136th Rifle Division of Colonel N.P. Simonyak, formed on the basis of the 8th Gangut brigade. She was given the task of holding back the offensive of the 268th division, clearing the ravines on the western bank of the enemy, and seizing the railway bridge.

The task remained unfulfilled. The 342nd regiment of the division crossed to the eastern bank of the river upstream along the bridge built by sappers, the battalion of the 270th regiment, with heavy losses, was transferred to the bridgehead by hunter boats. But even here it was not possible to achieve success in the eastern direction. The former company commander of the 342nd regiment recalls the attack of his 2nd battalion:

"Very few shells were assigned to the artillery preparation. It only lasted five or ten minutes. There was little sense from her, rather even harm, since shooting from the nat side attracted the attention of the enemy. We walked at full height, pouring along the embankment. We advanced six hundred meters - the Germans began to fire. We tried POLZKOM, but there were minefields and barbed wire ahead.

Two or three of our planes flew by. They didn't do anything special, but caused the German aviation to appear with their appearance. We had practically no protection against it. To be honest, we have already lost 70% of our squad. None of the platoon commanders remained, only two company commanders. By evening, out of 460 people in the battalion, there remained: 8 middle commanders, 9 juniors, and 23 privates.

We advanced no more than 2 km from Tosna. Reflected five or six per day

205

SS counterattacks ... The 269th and 270th regiments were brought into battle. They advanced a kilometer further than us before dawn. It seems to me that the operation failed because they attacked not at once with the whole division, but with separate regiments, and there was clearly not enough artillery.

On the German side, the offensive of the Soviet regiment was held back by the infantry company of the 636th security battalion, reinforced with machine guns, supported by tankers of the 25th regiment and artillery. The Germans also had a hard time, the rules, their "terrible losses" can only cause bitter laughter in us. Veteran of the police division F. Huzeman writes:

"August 23 at 11.50 - a new Russian attack with forces of up to two regiments in the Gieseke sector (western coast of Tosna), which ended in the complete destruction of the enemy. At 14.15 the Russians manage to break through in the same area. At 17.00 they launched an attack on the 1st regiment west of the mouth of Tosna, but were repulsed. At 2300, the Russians attacked again, they managed to break through, which was blocked at 2350. Attack - breakthrough - counterattack followed each other all Sunday 23 August. The dead were uncountable. Special teams buried approximately 100 people. There were 212 wounded at the dressing station."

Two Soviet divisions lost more than 5,000 fighters during the period from 19 to 25 August. On the floating bridge, the 952nd rifle regiment retreated to the western coast - thirty surviving Klkzhanovites.

The following days repeated the days of the past, the general picture of the battle remained unchanged. Until the end of August, formations of the Leningrad Front tried to develop success on Mga, attacking along the Kirov railway, but

could not do this. On September 2, the 43rd and 85th rifle divisions were brought into action - with the same result.

Due to the mutual depletion of human resources, the battles on Tosna subsided, moreover, in view of the onset of the offensive of the Volkhov Front, the Germans had to withdraw the 151st Infantry Regiment and units of the 12th Panzer Division. (Speaking of "resources": a German source notes the participation of 15-16-year-old teenagers on the Soviet side, which is confirmed by the journals of irretrievable losses of the 55th Army).

General Govorov was once again convinced that "many commanders and staffs have forgotten the elementary foundations of command and control of troops and their organization, have lost sight of the fact that forgetting these foundations can frustrate and ruin any operation," no matter how well it was conceived:

"They are on the path of false simplification, mechanically transferring the methods of controlling simpler forms of combat into a complex combat environment. They neglect the knowledge of the situation, without which any command of the battle is unthinkable. Not knowing the actual situation and, consequently, the position of their troops and those of the enemy, they deprive themselves of the opportunity to organize the subsequent stages of the battle, thereby letting things go to ruinous chance.

All this inevitably leads to the fact that the attack of uncontrolled units during the battle is divided into uncoordinated actions of individual units, the offensive

206

loses its purposefulness, the system of interaction of types of weapons is broken, the enemy, as a result, gets the initiative in his own hands, and our units, suffering heavy losses due to disorganization, do not fulfill their combat mission, despite superiority in forces. The headquarters of the army divisions, having lost contact with the troops, thereby lose their influence on the course and outcome of the battle, turning from headquarters into places of residence of commanders isolated from their troops and, therefore, depriving themselves of the opportunity to command.

By September 10, the front had stabilized. Ust-Tosno and a small foothold in Ivanovskoye remained in Russian hands. The losses of the army of General Sviridov on the entire front of the SS police division, the Germans, according to data received from prisoners and defectors, were estimated at 21 thousand people.

In an order on the results of the Ust-Tosnensk operation, the commander of the Leningrad Front gave a mercilessly accurate assessment of the actions of the 55th Army, which is broadly applicable to the entire Red Army:

"For this operation, 5 rifle divisions, a tank brigade, a separate tank battalion, significant artillery and mortar reinforcements and the Front Air Force were identified. Despite the superiority over the enemy, the task set by the army was not completed.

The main reasons for not completing tasks are:

The complete carelessness and illiteracy of the Military Council and the army headquarters, commanders and headquarters of divisions in organizing and conducting tactical reconnaissance of the enemy, as a result of which neither before the battle, nor during the battle, neither the army commander nor the division commanders knew the enemy.

The army commander and division commanders do not know how to direct artillery and reinforcement mortars and tanks in modern offensive combat. Artillery and mortar fire was not massed in decisive directions. The tactical missions of artillery and mortar reinforcements were set aimlessly at the stages of the battle. Objects of fire influence are not indicated at all to artillery, their choice is presented to the artillery commanders independently. Mortar fire, despite repeated instructions, was not massively used.

As a result of the ill-conceived use of artillery and mortars, the enemy's fire system at the forefront, his mortar and artillery batteries were not suppressed.

The introduction of tank units into battle was not ensured by a number of organizational measures. The minefields were not cleared, as a result of which, with the introduction into battle, the tanks suffered losses in their minefields. The roads were not prepared. The commander of the 268th Rifle Division had an attempt to solve problems by combating only tank units, without linking their actions with the infantry and without providing artillery support.

1. The headquarters of the armies and divisions turned out to be unprepared for management

207

troops. The chiefs of staff of armies and divisions did not supervise the activities of subordinate departments and chiefs of military branches, did not set specific tasks for them either in organizing the battle or in the course of it.

Clarification of the situation, position and actions of their troops took place with such a delay that individual private successes of the troops were not used and developed in a timely manner. There was no control over the execution of the given orders. The chiefs of staff were engaged only in fixing events, not controlling the actual position of the troops and the veracity of the incoming reports ...

In the operation, the army troops suffered heavy losses in personnel killed and wounded. The number of losses speaks for the fact that the commanding staff of the army has dulled the consciousness of the need to preserve the personnel of the army to the maximum. Disregard for unjustified losses of fighters and commanders is a characteristic feature of the command of the 55th Army. Even when there is no active hostilities, the 55th Army suffers the highest losses among the armies and front groups. Suffice it to point out that in the period from September 6 to September 9, the army lost 3,800 people killed and wounded ... ".

Naturally, the army commanders and divisional commanders did not like the very competent commander, calling him L.A. Talking among themselves "pharmacist".

No matter how hard the headquarters of the Volkhov Front tried to disguise its intentions, it was impossible to completely hide such large-scale preparations and movements of troops from German intelligence. Her reports were carefully recorded by General Halder:

August 25: "On the Volkhov, the enemy moves forward his command posts"

August 27: "Signs of a close Russian offensive south of Lake Ladoga are multiplying."

On August 27, at 6 o'clock in the morning, Meretskov began to cut the Shlisselburg ledge. After a two-hour artillery preparation, culminating in a powerful 10-minute raid of rocket-propelled mortars (they fired, they ruled, in the usual way, at the squares, including special power guns) along the entire line from Ladoga to Voronovo, eight divisions of the 8th army went on the offensive.

The main blow from Gaitolovo was dealt by the 6th Guards Rifle Corps, staffed mainly by cadets of infantry schools (this also had to be thought of - to form rifle companies from five minutes to five officers). The first two days the offensive developed quite successfully. Having overcome the Black River, breaking the front line of defense and wedged at the junction of the 227th and 223rd infantry divisions of the enemy to a depth of 1-2.5 kilometers, the formation of the Guards Corps under the command of Major General S.T. Biyakova, repelling continuous counterattacks, albeit slowly but persistently gnawed their way to Sinyavino, on the outskirts of which they reached on August 29. The attack vector ran along

208

clearings of the HIGH-VOLTAGE POWER LINE.

Then the 3rd Guards Division of Colonel N.M. Martynchuk aimed at the workers' settlement No. 5, advancing in the center of the 19th Guards Division of Colonel D.N. Barinova was supposed to take the Sinyavino Height and the village of Sinyavino, the 24th Guards Colonel P.Koshevoy - through the continuous forest and swamps to go to Lake Sinyavino. To the left of the 265th Infantry Division, Colonel B.N. Ushinsky captured the stronghold of Tortolovo and the 1st Estonian village. On the right flank, the 128th Infantry Division of Colonel I.B. Gribova immediately took the workers' settlement No. 8.

The enemy used defensive tactics by forces of small groups, no more than a company in number. He saddled the paths, held the edges and clearings, made extensive use of snipers, who disabled officers, crews of machine guns and guns. On the flanks of the breakthrough, the Germans managed to hold strongholds in the area of Mishkino, Porechye, and Gontovaya Lipka. With a tough defense, they fettered the significant forces of the attackers, forced them to wage many days of bloody battles.

In an effort to prevent the formation of the Volkhov Front from reaching the Neva in the Sinyavino direction and to eliminate the "very unpleasant breakthrough", the German command hastily transferred additional forces here, including the 170th Infantry Division, which arrived from the Crimea, parts of the 121st Infantry and 5th Mountain Rifle Divisions. They immediately counterattacked. The Germans also tried to use the "tigers" located in the area of the Mga station. However, the tanks, operating on completely unsuitable terrain for them, in the absence of bridges capable of withstanding their weight, could not even reach the battlefield, they had to be taken back.

On the third day, the Soviet offensive ground to a halt. First of all, because the tanks and infantry were left without artillery and air support, mainly because of the illiteracy of the chiefs, who were unable to dispose of the equipment that had fallen on their heads.

The artillery headquarters of the 8th Army "had no experience in managing large masses of artillery" (another misfortune of half-educated people - they gave too many guns, and they didn't explain what to do with them), so he didn't organize this management itself. And the chief of artillery of the front and his staff did not rack their brains with such questions at all, entrusting planning, organization and execution to lower authorities. Nobody created any strike groups, all the 24 artillery and guards mortar regiments attached to Starikov's army to reinforce were evenly distributed among divisions, with a density of 70-100 guns per kilometer of front, although there was a full opportunity to create a density of 180 barrels per kilometer in the direction of the main attack. But the principle of concentration of forces and means did not fit in the generals' heads.

After processing the forward edge of the enemy's defense (400-1000 m), escorting the advancing units and ensuring combat in depth was not even planned. Thus, the infantry went forward, the artillery remained in place and was inactive. I can't say what the "falcons" of General I.P. were doing. Zhuravlev, because on the third day no one saw them over the battlefield.

209

Testifies former divisional commander P.K. Koshevoy:

"On this day, not only the ground, but also the air situation changed dramatically. In the morning, enemy aircraft began to operate very actively against our troops. She flew

groups of 5-15 aircraft at intervals of 20 to 60 minutes ... Enemy aviation,
emerged

suddenly hung over the area of the 1st Estonian settlement and Tortolovo in a black, roaring mass. The bombers succeeded each other wave after wave in some kind of devilish carousel. Above the battlefield was the roar of explosions of heavy bombs and the bitter smoke of conflagrations.

From that moment until the end of the battle, the Germans maintained absolute air supremacy. As a result, the attacking regiments suffered heavy losses and quickly lost their combat effectiveness. Nevertheless, the historiographers of the 13th Air Army, who have not experienced this "carousel" in their own skin, impudently lie that throughout the entire Sinyavin operation "in general, Soviet aviation prevailed in the air", allegedly

destroying 215 enemy aircraft. The only strange thing is that this did not in the least prevent the enemy from destroying Soviet infantry and tanks.

The newly minted submachine gunners, in joy, continuously scribbled from their SHP for two days and, having shot all the stocks, were left without cartridges:

"And it happened because for the first time there were a lot of machine guns at the front ... As soon as the attack began, the soldiers pulled the trigger and fired whole discs without a break. Of course, there was also a psychological factor. With a machine gun pressed to the stomach and firing continuously, it is easier to go forward.

On August 31, a moment of shaky balance came. The first echelon went deep into the enemy defenses up to seven kilometers, but completely used up the "psychological factor". The losses of the 8th Army in five days amounted to 16,185 people. The Germans also did not have enough forces to restore the situation. In this situation, the Military Council of the front decided to commit the 4th Guards Rifle Corps under the command of General NA into battle on the morning of September 1. Hagen. The commander of the Leningrad Front was asked to use the favorable moment to launch a counterattack.

But these measures did not change the situation for the better. The Guards Corps fell under the "devil's carousel" even in the areas of concentration. Then his formations moved through the vast Sinyavinsky swamps, sometimes waist-deep in water, making their way under continuous shelling and bombing. The control of the troops was constantly violated. Their artillery and aviation could not cover the deployment of the corps. As a result, he suffered heavy losses before meeting the Germans.

By September 4, the greatest penetration depth of the troops of the Volkhov Front through the forest between Mga and Sinyavino (where the Germans had no strongholds) was 9 kilometers. There were only six kilometers left to the Neva, but they could not advance a single meter further. The enemy pulled the arriving Crimean divisions, units of the 121st and 96th Infantry Divisions from other sectors of the front into the breakthrough area. Tankers of the 12th division appeared in the Tortolovo area from

210

Bayer's groups, released after the battles for Ivanovskoye. H. Polman cites in his book excerpts from the captured diary of a Soviet commander:

"4.09. Yesterday a combat order was given: a breakthrough to the Leningrad highway to Moskovsky Dubrovka ... it seems that further advance without first expanding the penetration on the flanks is simply stupid. However, our 861st rifle regiment, by decision of the corps commander, Major General Hagen, has been attacking all day today, but does not budge. By 6 p.m., the regiment had lost 65% of its rank and file and 100% of its commanders.

In total, the 294th Rifle Division lost 6,934 men out of 7,288 who entered the battle in September. They blamed General Hagen, who failed to "implement firm leadership", and appointed Major General Sergei Vasilyevich instead of him.

Roginsky (1901 - 1960), which, in principle, did not change anything.

Fierce fighting continued on the flanks of the breakthrough, where troops from the front's shock group, blocking Mishkino, Porechye and the Kruglaya grove north of Gontovaya Lipka, fought to capture these strongholds. In the Rosh of the Round, which has become yet another bloody symbol of the Volkhov Front, there was a battalion resistance center of the 366th regiment of the 227th division under the command of Colonel Wengler. This stronghold, receiving daily reinforcements, was daily attacked by units of the 3rd Guards Rifle Division. On the very first day of the offensive, an entry appeared in the combat log of the 13th Guards Regiment:

"The units of promotion do not have. In the first company, 13 people remained, in the Second - 8, in the fourth and sixth - 20. The regiment commissar was wounded, the head of artillery was killed.

A special "surprise" for the Soviet soldiers was the German wood-and-earth fences. In German reports, the stronghold received the nickname "Wengler's Nose" - after the name of the colonel. In fact, the scenario of the Luban operation began to repeat itself: Soviet units were sitting in forests and swamps, the Germans held resistance centers, exterminated enemy infantry with aircraft and artillery, accumulating forces on the flanks of the breakthrough. The clearing remained the only supply line for all Soviet troops. But the Military Council demanded to "increase the pace" of the offensive and reach the Neva as soon as possible.

On September 5 and 6, a partial regrouping of the troops of the Volkhov Front was carried out. The 19th and 24th Guards Rifle Divisions were withdrawn from the 6th Guards Corps. At the same time, the Koshevoy division was deployed with the front to the south and actually went on the defensive, and its strip north of Lake Sinyavinsky was occupied by the 259th rifle division, which was tasked with overturning the enemy and advancing towards the Neva.

The breakthrough included the 191st Rifle Division of Lieutenant Colonel N.I. Artemenko and the 122nd Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Zazimko from the front reserve. They did not have any information either about the enemy or about the neighbors, nor did they have maps of the area. But they received the task: to take Sinyavino and connect with the Leningrad Front.

211

During the redeployment, almost all parts of these formations were subjected to intense German air raids. Entering the battle for Sinyavino on September 7 and continuing to suffer heavy losses, they reached the southwestern shore of the peat bog, but the Germans did not let them go further:

"Hundreds of bomber planes were constantly over our location and bombed, bombed endlessly."

Lieutenant Colonel Artemenko died immediately, on the third day a third of the 191st Rifle Division was killed. Some success was achieved on the left flank of the 8th Army, where the 327th Rifle Division of Colonel N.A. Polyakov by a roundabout maneuver, interacting with the 286th Infantry Division of Major General B.M. Goat, mastered

stronghold of Voronovo and firmly entrenched in it.

On September 8, the Military Council of the Volkhov Front decided to bring into battle the third echelon - the 2nd shock army. At the same time, the 4th and 6th Guards Corps were reassigned to General Klykov, which completely confused the control system. For reinforcement, 18 artillery and mortar regiments, 3 guards mortar regiments and 14 M-30 divisions were allocated. In total, the army had 1244 mortars and 563 guns.* But the rifle formations of the first two echelons were knocked out, 7-10% of the original composition remained in the battalions, the total losses reached 50 thousand people.

* At the same time, one must keep in mind that Soviet military statistics of enemy forces never counts 45 mm guns and 50 mm mortars, and when evaluating German artillery always includes 37 mm anti-tank guns.

A stubborn oncoming battle flared up, some sections passed from hand to hand several times. And then Manstein appeared on the scene. On the evening of September 4, Hitler called him. He ordered to immediately take command of the crisis sector of the front and, using the divisions arriving from the Crimea, to prevent the impending catastrophe. Manstein formed two shock groups and on September 10 launched a counterattack under the base of the Soviet breakthrough.

The 30th Army Corps (24th, 132nd, 170th Infantry Divisions) advanced from the south; from the north, through the Kruglaya grove, the 26th Corps (121st Infantry, 5th and 28th Mountain Rifle Divisions). For Meretskov and his staff, this came as a complete surprise; the Soviet command did not foresee any defensive measures in such a case. Meanwhile, the enemy pressed the Soviet troops from the flanks, turning the wedge driven into the German defenses into a "bottle".

In response, the Soviet command continued to set exclusively offensive missions. On the northern flank, the 128th, and after it the 376th rifle divisions unsuccessfully stormed Lipka. In the depths of the breakthrough, the Germans launched a counterattack from Kelkolovo, split the battle formations of the 4th Guards Corps and surrounded the 137th Rifle Brigade. She hasn't left the ring.

The 374th Rifle Division, together with the tankers of the 29th Brigade, broke through the second line of enemy defenses east of the Big Swamp. But the division lost about 500

212

people per day, by September 20, 764 fighters remained in it. Roginsky's rifle corps had only 853 active bayonets!

In the mouth of the breakthrough, the 3rd Guards Division, the 53rd, 22nd and 137th brigades with tanks continued to attack the Kruglaya Grove. The 286th division fought in the German trenches on the northern outskirts of Mishkino. The 265th division was advancing southwest of Tortolovo along the Chernaya River, but under continuous bombardment was forced

move away. On September 16, the Germans recaptured the 1st Estonian settlement, defending which the 951st Rifle Regiment was completely killed.

From September 9 to 11, General Govorov tried to organize an offensive in the Moscow Dubrovka area, something "sunk into the soul" of all the commanders of this "unexpected" place for the enemy. The main goal was to break through the enemy defenses on the left bank of the Neva, capture Mustalovo and, building on the success on Sinyavino, link up with units of the Volkhov Front. The 46th, 86th, 70th Rifle Divisions, and the 11th Rifle Brigade were allocated to the strike group.

However, two divisions of the first echelon, reinforced by two battalions of front-line junior lieutenants, did not even manage to cross the river. Having fallen under the blows of artillery and enemy aircraft, the Leningraders soon lost almost all their means of transportation. Small units that managed to reach the opposite shore were thrown into the water by the Germans.

In the first half of the month, the Lenfront troops also made attempts to clear the Yam-Izhora region of the Germans, but they were also unsuccessful. On September 12, the Headquarters, by its directive, ordered the operation to be temporarily stopped due to the fact that the Leningrad Front:

"He turned out to be incapable of sensibly organizing the crossing of the Neva River and, with his inept actions, stupidly ruined a large number of commanders and fighters."

The total losses during the three attempts amounted to about 738 people killed, 2245 wounded, 230 pontoons and boats. Govorov removed all command of the Neva Operational Group.

By September 21, after heavy fighting, Manstein managed to close the ring and cut the only road along which the Soviet troops were supplied in a "bag" (at this time, Meretskov reported to Stalin another "plan of the operation to defeat the enemy's Sinyavinskaya grouping and reach the Neva, assuring the Supreme Commander: "I consider it possible to carry out the operation with the available forces of the front. In the following days, he repulsed all Russian attacks from the east, aimed at releasing the 2nd shock army, which was again in the "cauldron". In the description of Koshevoy, a painfully familiar picture emerges:

"Our attempts to deliver ammunition and food during the day on horseback through the forest and swamps were thwarted by the enemy. Groups of carriers of two or three people now fought their way only at night and often died on the way.

213

brave. It was not possible to regularly supply troops with the help of U-2 aircraft. They could operate only at night, and the cargoes fell more into unsteady bogs, from where it was impossible to extract them ...

At the end of September 26, a radiogram was received directly from the commander

front. It was ordered by steadfast defense, especially on the left flank, to prevent the enemy from spreading to the north. In conclusion, it was said that the Motherland will not forget us."

According to German data, 7 Soviet divisions, 6 rifle and 4 tank brigades were surrounded. Now Manstein turned out to be the advancing side in conditions of little use for this terrain. But he did not even think of driving his soldiers into the attack into the forests and swamps, but tactically competently repeated the Luban version of the liquidation of the encircled group:

"Since the entire area of the boiler was covered with dense forest, any attempt on the German side to finish off the enemy with infantry attacks would lead to huge human casualties. In this regard, the army headquarters pulled up powerful artillery from the Leningrad Front, which began to fire continuously at the boiler, supplemented by more and more new air attacks. Thanks to this fire, the forest region in a few days was turned into a field pitted with funnels, on which only the remains of the trunks of the once proud giant trees were visible.

Meretskov also remembered this "continuous fire", although, judging by his recollections, there was no trace of any environment:

"In those DAYS, a difficult situation arose in the area covered by the enemy of our troops. The formations and units were mixed up with each other, their control got messed up every now and then ...

The army artillery headquarters exercised little control over the use of RVGK artillery, and it was not always used for its intended purpose. As a result, the fight against enemy artillery was not organized. Artillery fire was planned, as a rule, hastily. Due attention was not paid to the organization of interaction between artillery and infantry "...

Of the 85 thousand who were part of the 2nd shock army before the start of the operation, taking into account the replenishment, 30,988 people remained. For all these reasons, on the evening of September 27, the commander of the front, without waiting for the approval of the Headquarters, "with pain in his heart" ordered the withdrawal of troops located west of the Black River to the eastern bank, and the thrifty (not to people, to equipment) General Klykov added from myself:

"I categorically forbid the withdrawal without materiel. Everyone who came out without materiel should be returned back.

According to Meretskov, by dawn on September 29, "the bulk" of the Soviet troops returned "to about the old positions." He nevertheless "forgot" that by that time there were already Germans on the eastern coast: on September 22 they recaptured Tortolovo and captured the heights to the north of it, on the 25th they took Gaitolovo by storm and penetrated further south. True, there was no solid front, so individual Soviet units managed to get through peat bogs and swampy lowlands to

his. Without troops and without headquarters, General Hagen crawled out of the encirclement. Scout 4th

Guards Corps G.G. Borisov recalls:

"On September 27, we received an order to withdraw from the front line near Lake Sinyavinskoye and arrive at such and such a square. We arrived at the place at night ... We, active bayonets at the Hagen field headquarters, turned out to be 16 people. On the evening of September 28, Hagen ordered the creation of two groups: one of three people with the task of

disarming three burned-out armored cars, removing
locks

with guns and machine guns. The second group (thirteen people) take the last planes

cartridges and crackers. Everything that we cannot carry, drown in the quagmire. If on our return we do not find the headquarters, we must rely only on our own strength. When leaving on September 29, the headquarters of the corps ran into the defense of the Germans and almost completely died. Hagen sat for almost a day in a funnel with water; knowing that we should follow, he recognized us and went out with us.

Stalin saw through the peppy reports that Meretskov and Klykov had once again led the 2nd Shock Army into a trap. He demanded an accurate report and the adoption of urgent measures to save the troops:

"For several days, the command of the Volkhov Front and the 2nd shock army cannot give an accurate and clear answer about the situation with the passages south of the Gaitolovo-Kelkolovo road. As a result of such criminal carelessness and false self-reassuring information about the situation, one gets the impression that nothing special has happened, the troops can be withdrawn about the passage south of the Gaitolovo-Kelkolovo road. In fact, the troops in this passage are engaged in battle with some unknown "small groups" of the enemy. Moreover, in the presence of completely fresh, replenished 314 sd, 73 sbr and five divisions emerging from the fuse, these groups are not destroyed, but continue to clog the neck and do not allow the withdrawal of troops of the 2nd bd. army. Such a situation can only exist as a result of the lack of command and control. As you can see, the command of the front and the 2nd ud. armies do not want to admit the seriousness of the situation west of the river. Black, do not want to directly lead the withdrawal of parts of the 2nd beat. army, and get off with orders torn from the actual situation on the allegedly possible withdrawal of troops of the 2nd ud. army to the area east of Gaytolovo.

The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command ORDERS:

1. By 10.00 September 29, 1942, honestly report the true situation of the units west of the river. Chernaya and about the presence of passages in the neck southwest of Gaitolovo.

2. Take direct control of the withdrawal of the 2nd Shock Army in the area east of Gaitolovo directly to yourself and your headquarters.

Submit a detailed plan for the withdrawal of troops by 18.00 September 29, 1942.

According to Manstein, the fighting in the pocket ended on 2 October. During them, the Germans took 12 thousand prisoners, destroyed 244 tanks, over 300 guns and 500 mortars. By that time, six Soviet divisions (191, 259, 374, 294, 19th Guards) and five rifle brigades (22,

23rd, 32nd, 33rd and 53rd) there were 14 thousand soldiers and commanders and 112 field guns

215

- mainly artillery and rear units. Meretskov reported:

"It is not ruled out that individual individuals will still emerge from the western shore in an unorganized manner."

In the next ten days of "individuals" another 2909 people came out. According to the report of the Commander of the 2nd Shock Army to the Military Council of the Front, there were 108 men from the 19th Guards Division; from the 374th rifle - 687 (including the wounded); from the 191st division - 600; from the 259th - 659; from the 22nd Infantry Brigade - 22; from the 23rd - 100; from the 33rd - 234; from the 53rd - 211; from the 132nd - 288 boys.

The new offensive of the Neva Operational Group of the Leningrad Front was scheduled for September 26th. The forcing was planned to be carried out at the Annenskaya site, the 1st town by three rifle divisions and a rifle brigade.

On the appointed day, the strike force, supported by 117 combat aircraft, land and naval artillery, together with the marines, began crossing the Neva and quickly captured the bridgehead in the Arbuzovo area and Moscow Dubrovka. At the same time, the 136th division of the 55th army delivered a diversionary strike at the Tosnensky line.

By the end of the first day, separate regiments of the 70th and 86th divisions and a battalion of the 11th rifle brigade were transferred to the left bank. The second echelon could not cross due to strong fire resistance. Fierce born on the revived Nevsky "patch" continued until October 6. It was not possible to expand the captured bridgehead, break through the defenses to the full depth and unite with the Volkhov Front.

Only in the first four days of the operation, the Soviet units lost, according to incomplete data, 8244 people, spent 133 thousand shells and mines. After the defeat of the Volkhovites, the continuation of attacks against the enemy, who had the opportunity to freely build up his forces, did not promise any prospects. Due to the operational inexpediency of holding a bridgehead on the eastern coast, the Stavka decided to evacuate. When all the troops had already been withdrawn, with the onset of dawn on October 9, intelligence sent to the Moscow Dubrovka region did not detect the enemy. In this regard, a reinforced company of the 70th Infantry Division was transferred to the left bank of the Neva, which occupied a bridgehead: on the right - ravines north of Arbuzov, along the front to the highway and on the left - a school in Moscow Dubrovka. On October 20, the "piglet" was accepted by the 46th Infantry Division

Colonel E.V. Kozik.

Opposite, units of the 170th Infantry Division settled. The landscape that opened up to him, which was a giant burial ground, amazed even the worldly-wise veterans of the storming of Sevastopol. Historiographer of the division H. Kardelj

fixed:

"Only old commanders who knew the carnage of the First World War could

216

recall something similar to the Nevsky bridgehead. Only occasionally did a crushed tree stump stick out on the ground, plowed up by heavy artillery, rocket mortars and aerial bombs. The wrecked tanks stood near the deep craters and trenches leading to the Russian trenches. The arms and legs of dead Russian soldiers protruded from the walls of the trenches. Everything else was covered with earth after the explosions of shells. There were minefields all around.

Thus, during the Sinyavino operation, the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts failed to break through the blockade. But by chance it turned out that at the same time the attempt of the German command to organize a decisive assault on the city was thwarted. This was credited to the credit of the Soviet commanders, as well as the chroniclers of the glorious deeds of the "invincible and legendary", pretending that it was for this purpose that the operation was started:

"The calculations of the Nazi command to storm the city of Lenin suffered a complete collapse."

Indeed, the "collapse of calculations" and the refusal to conduct Operation Nordlicht, the German Field Marshal confirms:

"If the task of restoring the front of the 18th army was completed, then nevertheless the divisions of our army suffered significant losses. However, it was spent

significant

part of the ammunition destined for the attack on Leningrad. Therefore, there was no question of an early offensive."

One could rejoice at the successes of Soviet intelligence, which revealed enemy plans, or the foresight of the military-political leadership, who unraveled Hitler's intentions, if not for one thing ... Information about the regrouping of German divisions from Crimea to Leningrad, indicating "need to check" The army was shared with the fronts only on 14 October. And the version of the "preemptive strike" was thrown up by Manstein himself, who believed that the Russians had timely tracked the transfer of troops of the 11th Army, and therefore wrote the following in his memoirs about the actions of the Volkhov Front: "with this offensive, the enemy obviously wanted to forestall our offensive." That's just his book was published in 1955.

Until that time, the propagandists of Glavpur and Agitprop fed the Shcherbakov version to the masses, according to which the attack on Sinyavino was undertaken in order to pull off part of the Wehrmacht forces from the southern sector of the front:

"This goal has been reached. Several German divisions, including 4 infantry divisions stationed in the Crimea, namely 24, 28, 132 and 170, and intended for

ope

radios near Stalingrad and on the Terek, were hastily transferred to the Sinyavino region and here they were defeated or thoroughly disheveled by Soviet troops.

In any case, they turned the battle in the Southern Ladoga region from a military failure into almost an outstanding victory for the Red Army. Soviet reports estimated enemy losses at 60 thousand people killed, wounded and captured,

217

200 tanks, over 600 guns and mortars, and 260 aircraft. Marshal Meretskov, who "destroyed" adversaries on paper with the dashingness of an inveterate political officer, outdid even the Soviet Information Bureau, saying that the Germans lost about 60 thousand only in killed and prisoners, excluding the wounded. At first, Stalin wanted to remove Kirill Afanasyevich from his post, but after making sure that he had defeated and "disheveled" Manstein himself, he changed his mind.

True, in Berlin it was believed that the Wehrmacht troops won a victory, and a considerable one, defeating 7 Soviet divisions in the Sinyavino Cauldron, as reported to the world by the media of the Third Reich. Of course, Moscow called the message of the German command a shameless lie and offered its own interpretation of the events:

"Neither south of Lake Ladoga, nor in any other place did the Nazis encircle, and not only not a single division, but even a single Soviet regiment."

There was no second general Vlasov, and it would have looked stupid to step on the same rake twice. Therefore, they decided to pretend that the Germans did not surround anyone. Judging by the publications in the Military Historical Journal, historians of the Russian General Staff still think so today.

During the failed breakthrough of the blockade and the "successful" retreat, the troops of Meretskov and Govorov lost more than 40 thousand people irretrievably and another 73.5 thousand wounded, and in total almost 114 thousand soldiers and commanders, out of those 190 thousand that started the battle. But modern St. Petersburg historians have these figures

raise doubts as significantly underestimated:

"For it is unlikely that they take into account the countless reinforcements destroyed by German aircraft on the way from the place of unloading to the front line, and the reinforcements that arrived in the divisions during the fighting."

In addition, for some reason, our statistical studies take into account the losses of only the 1st, 8th and 2nd shock armies. The remaining six armies, which continuously delivered "auxiliary" and distracting strikes, did not seem to take part in the Sinyavino operation at all. As for territorial acquisitions, "our troops retained the resistance centers of Voronovo and Settlement No. 8 captured from the enemy," Meretskov reported "honestly". Lied, of course.

German losses in the "First Battle of Ladoga" amounted to about 26 thousand Human.

Of course, everything was not in vain: firstly, they thwarted the assault on the Germans, secondly, they "bled the enemy", thirdly, they learned a lot again:

"In the course of the operation, the artillerymen of the front, having gone through a good school, gained their first experience in organizing the actions of large masses of artillery in an offensive and controlling it in battle. The study of this experience required special training of artillery units.

And

increased attention to working out the issues of organizing and commanding artillery reconnaissance ... as well as equipping observation posts, firing positions, shelters,

218

dugouts, planning an artillery offensive, organizing interaction with infantry and tanks ... The training of artillerymen in orienting on the ground (!!), determining the point of standing using a topographic map, and moving in azimuth was important.

Assessing the actions of the Soviet troops, a veteran of the SS police division F. Huzeman writes:

"Then the stupidity of the Russian command in relation to the infantry battle was quite obvious. However, this soon changed, and we felt in our own skin how much the enemy borrowed from our

tactics."

Having barely calculated the losses, Meretskov assured the Headquarters that the troops of the Volkhov Front would "behave actively" and put forward "considerations" for a series of private offensive operations. However, Stalin, far from confident in the defeat of Manstein and fearful of enemy strikes "simultaneously in the directions of Mga, Kirishi", who did not rule out even an attempt to force the Neva, cooled the ardor of the commander.

On October 3, he ordered no offensive operations to be started, but to go on the defensive. On October 5, the Supreme Commander determined that Meretskov again needed the help of the Mekh-lis and again appointed Lev Zakharovich a member of the Military Council of the Volkhov Front, demoting A.I. Zaporozhets.

It was just right not to break through the blockade, but to withdraw troops from Leningrad. In the summer of 1942, the Red Army suffered a series of crushing defeats: not only the Ust-Tosno-Sinyavino operation failed, the second Rzhev-Vyazemsky operation carried out by Zhukov turned into a bloodbath. And the main misfortune was the complete defeat in the south, where the 6th army of Friedrich von Paulus reached the Volga and fought on the streets of Stalingrad, where the 1st tank army of Ewall von Kleist rushed through the Terek to the Baku oil fields. The Soviet Union was on the brink of collapse.

But by the autumn of 1942, the top military leadership had completely eroded the hatred mood. It became clear that the troops needed to be trained, operations should be carefully prepared, that Soviet regulations and instructions did not correspond to the realities of modern warfare, and "throats" prevailed among generals.

First of all, the Supreme Commander ordered everyone to dig in, and for the first time in the war, the Soviet armies along the entire length of the Soviet-German front began to create a real defense. So, the Western and Kalinin fronts, adopting German and recalling domestic experience, learned to dig trenches, tie them to the terrain, and create an effective multi-layered fire system.

Specifically, the Volkhov Front was ordered by the Stavka directives of October 5 and 14 to immediately start building at least three or four defensive lines and to evict a total of

219

civilian population. Cities and settlements should be adapted to long-term all-round defense, turning "every house, every street, every quarter into a fortress", special attention should be paid to the use of stone buildings, basements, underground utilities, wells, factory pipes, the creation of a developed communication and signaling network, the use of engineering barriers. To direct the defense, appoint commandants of the garrisons "from staunch commanders." The experience of Stalingrad is clearly felt in the recommendations.

General Khrenov went to the Kruglaya grove, examined the German fortifications and came to the conclusion that "it was not a sin to adopt and develop the experience of the enemy." Without complaints about the labor intensity and lack of engineering equipment, wood-and-earth fences with firing nests, shelters for personnel, warehouses and small points were built along the entire front line. The road network has been improved. At the same time, the fighters and commanders were explained that the wood-and-earth fence, just like a steam locomotive and an airplane, is a "domestic development", which was "invented" by Leningrad engineers called up from the reserve, experts in "old Russian architecture".

In Leningrad, on the orders of the Stavka, the Nevsky Frontier was fortified, and the 67th Army was deployed on the basis of the Neva Operational Group. Major General Mikhail Pavlovich Dukhanov (1896-1969) was appointed her commander.

General Khrenov later asked himself:

"Was such a large expenditure of effort and labor justified in the construction of fortifications that the enemy did not try to storm? Was this titanic work a vain reinsurance caused by a lack of ability to foresee the course of events? I will answer now, as then: no! ...

The situation as a whole could turn out in such a way that the Nazis, if they knew about the weakness of our defense, would concentrate their forces on one of the sectors and proceed to active operations. "Volkhovskaya notch" did not give them a chance of success. We are,

having engineering cover, they were able to withdraw a significant part of the forces from the defense at the end of the year, thereby increasing the offensive capabilities of the front.

And exactly. On October 8, Stalin, unlike his generals, who never stopped learning, issued an "Order on improving the tactics of offensive combat and on the battle formations of subunits, units and formations." In it, in particular, he stated:

"The echelon construction of combat formations of subunits and units not only does not meet the requirements of modern warfare, but also brings harm, since it leads to unnecessary losses, dooms a significant part of the troops to inactivity and deprives our troops of the opportunity to fall on the enemy with all the force of all fire weapons". The order demanded that they stop attacking in a crowd in depth, and turn around in a chain, concentrating a maximum of active fighters and firepower in the first echelon; commanders of all levels, in order to develop success or repel a surprise attack by the enemy, have reserves at their disposal;

220

The next day, Stalin signed the historic Order No. 307 establishing complete unity of command and abolishing the institution of military commissars in the Red Army.

In November, the Soviet command began to develop a new, fifth in a row, operation to break the blockade of Leningrad.

221

Chapter 10. BALTIC FLEET in 1942

After losing all its bases in Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the Baltic Fleet found itself locked in the "marquise puddle" - a small space between Kronstadt and Leningrad. *

* This name is associated with the title of Minister of the Sea under Tsar Alexander I, emigrant from France, the Marquis de Traversay. In order to "economy" he did not allow the ships of the Baltic Fleet to sail further than Kronstadt.

The main islands of the Gogland stretch since the end of 1941 were in the hands of the enemy, which ensured the stability of the German-Finnish anti-submarine line, designed to reliably block the access of Soviet submarines to the Baltic Sea.

Understanding the significance of these islands, the command of the Baltic Fleet

made repeated attempts to get them back. So, on December 31, 1941, a detachment of marines consisting of 170 people under the command of Colonel A.A. Barinov, leaving Lavensari Island and making a 43-kilometer night crossing on thin ice, occupied Bolshoy Tyuters Island. At dawn on January 2, 1942, the detachment again made a night throw and captured the island of Gogland with a sudden blow.

However, in late March - early April, German and Finnish detachments recaptured them again, since the command of the Lenfront did not find it possible to allocate forces and means to strengthen the garrisons in a timely manner. New belated attempts by the Soviet side to occupy both islands ended in failure, as historians of the Russian fleet modestly point out, "due to some tactical errors" and severe weather conditions.

Thus, the forward positions of the Soviet troops and the Gulf of Finland were only a few miles west of Kronstadt, on the small islands of Seskar and Lavensari. The Baltic Fleet did not have a single base that would not be shot through by enemy artillery. The exits from Leningrad and Kronstadt were under the blows of German guns and were constrained by mine laying. Soviet surface ships had no chance to go to the open sea, and there was no point in this. Therefore, they were included in the defense of the besieged city, and a significant part of the crews went ashore, replenishing the ranks of the infantry.

However, the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to expel the Nazi invaders from Soviet soil in 1942 required the Navy command to contribute to "powerful blows." People's Commissar N.G. Kuznetsov, in turn, issued a directive in which he emphasized the need to intensify offensive operations on enemy sea lanes. The Military Council of the Baltic Fleet, following the instructions of the People's Commissar, presented its views on

summer campaign:

"The main task of the fleet for 1942 is to inflict maximum damage

222

the enemy on his communications and clog the Finnish skerries with mines. The great length of the longitudinal communication of the Gulf of Finland and the need in connection with this to have an intermediate maneuverable base for the actions of our light forces and the exit of submarines pose a priority task for the fleet - mastering the island of Gogland and the island of B. Tyuters.

The main role in the planned operation was assigned to submarine forces. Despite heavy losses, the Baltic Fleet still had 51 submarines. The boats had to break through the anti-submarine lines in the Gulf of Finland, break out into the expanses of the Baltic and disrupt enemy shipping there. It was supposed to continuously, for six months, until the onset of freeze-up, strike at sea communications throughout the Baltic Sea. The boats were supposed to operate in three echelons, 10-12 units in each.

The plan developed by the headquarters of the submarine brigade under the leadership of Captain 1st Rank A.M. Stetsenko, at first envisaged the operational support of the actions of submarines and even their interaction with aviation. The Fleet Air Force was entrusted with reconnaissance of the system of sentinel service and anti-submarine defense of the enemy before the release of boats, striking at enemy ship patrols. The plan also provided for the guidance of boats by aircraft on the objects of attack.

But these proposals remained on paper, since by that time almost all naval aviation was involved in land directions. The idea of creating a special air group of the High Command Reserve (5 bomber and mine-torpedo, 5 fighter air regiments) also remained unrealized. It was supposed to inflict powerful strikes on enemy bases in the Gulf of Finland and Bothnia, its surface ships and convoys, thereby weakening its anti-submarine defense and providing conditions for the "work" of its submarine forces.

Ultimately, the Baltic submariners had to go on a solo voyage, designed for maximum autonomy, until the torpedoes were completely used up.

By May 1, 1942, 10 boats were technically ready to go to sea. Their crews worked out the organization of service, diving and surfacing on the Neva, which had opened from the ice, between Liteiny and Okhtinsky bridges.

Communications on the Baltic Sea were of great strategic importance for the Third Reich. They ensured the use of the Baltic resources, the supply of up to 80% of iron ore, as well as industrial products from Sweden, timber and pulp from Finland, the transfer of troops and weapons to the Soviet-German front. They practiced the transportation of strategic raw materials purchased by Sweden in the United States and other countries to send them to Germany. Enemy transport ships sailed freely on the high seas, without escort.

223

The Germans and Finns took measures in advance to eliminate the underwater threat to their navigation. Already in April, they installed artillery batteries, observation posts, direction-finding and hydroacoustic stations on the islands and the coast. To complicate the navigation situation, they removed the barrier signs, destroyed lighthouses and other coastal landmarks.

In the first ten days of May, as soon as the Gulf of Finland was free of ice, they set about creating two PLO lines, the basis of which were minefields, and which were patrolled by hunter boats and other small ships. From the air, reconnaissance aircraft controlled the water area. Steel anti-submarine nets were placed in separate shallow areas.

The first line blocked the Gulf of Finland at the turn of Gogland - Narva Bay. The density of the barriers here reached 170 mines per square mile. The second line ran from the Hanko Peninsula on the Finnish side to Nargen Island off the coast of Estonia.

During 1942, the Germans and Finns fielded more than 12 thousand mines of various types (including bottom and antenna) and mine defenders. Together with the barriers of 1941, the number of mines in the Gulf of Finland exceeded 21,000. Over 100 different ships and boats were deployed in the areas adjacent to the barriers. These forces and means, coupled with mine positions, formed a single anti-submarine line with a depth of over 150 miles, according to Admiral Tributs, "equal to ten Dover barrages" during the First World War. At the same time, in an effort to prevent the deployment of the forces of the Baltic Fleet and completely block it, the German aviation laid bottom non-contact mines in the island area, in the roads and fairways of Kronstadt.

Nevertheless, for 6 months (June - November) 1942, the command of the Baltic Fleet sent 35 submarines to break through. The release of each of them required a lot of time and effort. On the transition from Leningrad to Kronstadt and further to Lavensari, which was carried out on the surface, they were covered with fire and smoke screens by surface ships and boats. Aviation and artillery suppressed enemy batteries on the south coast.

Near Lavensari Island, the boats were fully charging their batteries and receiving the latest intelligence data. There they were constantly threatened by aviation, so they lay on the ground all daylight hours, approaching the piers only at night. To the west of Lavensari, the most difficult stage began, about 200 miles (370 km) long, which the boats had to overcome on their own, without security and cover, at the possible maximum depths, but not less than 10-15 meters from the bottom, in order to avoid undermining the bottom mines.

Having crossed the Gogland anti-submarine position, the submarines surfaced to charge their batteries. It was yet another "deadly trick": in the conditions of "white nights" to be on the surface for seven hours in a row, attracting enemy "hunters" with the roar of diesel engines. Then it was necessary to overcome one more position and go to the designated area.

Due to enemy minelaying from the air, an acute shortage of minesweepers,

224

organizational difficulties, the deployment of the first echelon was delayed by almost a month. Only on May 25 did the M-97 go to sea, which was entrusted with reconnaissance of the enemy's PLO in the Western Gogland reach. In fact, the boat did not reach the area assigned to it, did not obtain any intelligence data, for 12 days of navigation, the commander of the "baby" Lieutenant Commander N.V. Dyakov failed to detect either the enemy or his defensive means.

The first echelon began deployment on 3 June and completed it on 4 July. Of the 11 boats scheduled to leave, 9 went to sea, reached the designated positions 7 (Sh-303, Shch-304, ShchSh-317, Shch-320, Shch-406, Lembit). The submarine Shch-405 (commander I.V. Grachev), which was heading to Lavensari unaccompanied, died on the crossing on June 13, presumably as a result of an accident. The M-95 boat (commander L.P. Fedorov) exploded on mines in the area of the Eastern Gogland reach two days later.

Each of the boats that broke through into the open sea was in position for five to seven weeks. When acting on communications, the positional method was used as the main one. All seven commanders reported victories. For two months, Soviet submariners, having used up 47 torpedoes, and, as a rule, not observing the results of attacks, chalked up about 20 sunken and damaged enemy ships. In a number of cases, they fired at single transports with artillery fire from their 45-mm farts.

Shch-317, captain-lieutenant N.K., achieved the greatest success. Mokhova, the first to overcome anti-submarine lines. She operated in Swedish territorial waters and sank 3 transports, including one Swedish. But on July 12, she herself was sunk with depth charges by the Swedish destroyer Stockholm. 3 more ships (including 2 Swedish ones) sank the S-7 captain of the 3rd rank of the joint venture. Lisin, who received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for this campaign.

The appearance of Soviet submarines near the coast of Sweden, where German ships sailed, as if in peacetime, without an escort, with running lights on, came as a surprise to the Germans, the Finns and, of course, the Shvels. Considering the blockade to be quite effective, they classified the torpedoing of the first ships as a mine explosion, so instead of searching and chasing boats, they trawled "dangerous areas".

Sovinformburo helped them sort out the situation, and on July 11 informed the whole world about the successes of the Baltic submariners. The enemy took urgent measures: increased the composition of the PLO forces, introduced a system of convoys, moved routes closer to the Swedish coast and to shallow water areas, increased the density of minefields, and strengthened the sentinel service. The conditions for the operations of submarines began to deteriorate sharply.

To the northeast of Gogland is the small island of Sommers, which played the role of an advanced post for monitoring the movement of Soviet ships and submarines on the Eastern reach in the enemy anti-submarine defense system. There was a Finnish garrison on the island: 92 people, 12 guns of caliber

225

from 20 mm to 75 mm, 2 mortars, 12 machine guns. The commander of the Kronstadt naval base, captain 1st rank Gordey Ivanovich Levchenko, suggested that the command of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet take possession of this island.

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G.I. Levchenko (1897-1981) still on November 6, 1941 had the rank of vice admiral and served as Deputy Commissar of the Navy. For the failure of the defense of Kerch, on December 8, 1941, he was expelled from the party and sentenced to 10 years in the camps. However, Stalin pardoned Levchenko, confining himself to a lowering of the 8th rank to a kaprang. Therefore, Levchenko, as they say, "left out of his skin" in order to somehow rehabilitate himself.

His proposal was approved. But, like the vast majority of Soviet naval and airborne operations of the first period of the war, this one was thought out so "wonderfully" that it could not fail.

The landing began on 8 July. It was preceded by an air raid, which did not cause any serious damage to the Finns, due to the lack of intelligence about their defenses. Of the 120 bombs dropped, 37 fell into the water, the rest fell outside the enemy strongholds. Of the 256 Soviet paratroopers (with ten Maxim machine guns), 164 people hit the island, another 77 fighters drowned or were killed at the time of landing, and 15 people remained on board the boat. Landing fire support was just as ineffective as air support, for the same reasons - lack of intelligence, communications, fire adjustments. During a fierce battle, the marines managed to capture one of the four strongholds.

Shortly after the start of the landing, the Finns sent 2 gunboats, 5 patrol boats and aircraft to help their garrison. At 11 o'clock in the morning they delivered reinforcements to Sommers - 109 fighters. After that, both fire and numerical superiority turned out to be on the Finnish side. In the afternoon, the Soviet command also threw in reinforcements: 57 fighters. At about 5 p.m., three torpedo boats approached the eastern coast of the island with them and began landing. At the same time, 13 people drowned along with the only radio station. 23 wounded paratroopers were removed from the shore, but communication with the landing force could not be established.

By evening, 2 Finnish minelayers arrived in the area, as well as German ships - 2 minesweepers, a floating battery and a mother ship. On the Soviet side, they were opposed by a gunboat, a patrol boat, 2 base minesweepers, torpedo boats and hunter boats.

By the morning of July 9, it was all over. 149 paratroopers surrendered, about 150 died. The Baltic Fleet lost torpedo boats TKA-22, 31, 71, 83, 113, 121 and a small hunter MO-306; the gunboat "Kama" and one minesweeper were seriously damaged. Up to 100 sailors died on sunken and damaged ships.

The losses of the Finns amounted to 21 people killed, 63 wounded. Despite the reports of Soviet sailors and aviators about the sinking and inflicting heavy damage to ten enemy ships and boats, in reality, neither the Finns nor the Germans lost a single ship. To eliminate the threat of new landings on Sommers, the Finns soon placed east and south of his minefields "Ontajärvi" and "Norppe".

226

After the return of the submarines of the first echelon, the deployment of ten submarines of the second echelon began on August 9, which had to operate in more difficult and dangerous conditions. Three of them were damaged even before crossing the Gogland position and returned to base. They sent two others instead.

In August, an attempt was made to support the submariners' breakthrough with a forceful action. It was supposed that the detachment of surface forces would go to the islands of Gogland and Bolshoy

Ty-ters to suppress enemy PLO forces. However, the exit of the patrol boat "Storm" and the trawler "Fugas", accompanied by patrol and torpedo boats, ended in the death of both ships on mines on the night of August 24 and the refusal to continue this attempt.

The area of operation of the second echelon boats (L-3, M-96, M-97, S-9, S-13, Shch-407, Shch 309, Shch-310, Lembit) covered a wide area from the Gulf of Bothnia to the island of Borholm . Seven of the eight commanders who broke into the Baltic Sea reported success. Particularly distinguished /L] -3 captains of the 3rd rank P.D. Grishchenko, who "destroyed" 6 transports and "an enemy destroyer of a new construction" (however, as one might expect, he did not receive the title of hero, but was removed from the bridge at the denunciation of his commissar); submarine "Lembit" Lieutenant Commander A.M. Matiyasevich, who "sank" 3 ships with torpels; S-13 Lieutenant Commander P.1. Malanchenko, who "sent 3 vehicles to the bottom" of the Gulf of Bothnia. In total, the results of the actions of the second echelon were estimated by the command at 14 "destroyed" fascist transports. 49 torpels were used up. The list of losses was added to the M-97, which went missing in early September.

The enemy, trying to block the entire thickness of the water, undertook an additional setting of antenna and non-contact mines. In September, the Finns installed a net barrier in the Northern Gogland passage and in the area of the Kalbodagrund shoal. This fact passed by the attention of naval intelligence, the headquarters of the fleet still recommended to the commanders to use the Northern Passage for a breakthrough. Finnish submarines took up positions in the Gulf of Finland and the Aland Sea. During daylight hours, they lay on the ground and conducted hydroacoustic observation, and at night they tacked on the surface. A PLO search and strike group operated in the Gulf of Bothnia.

The Military Council of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet decided to begin the withdrawal of submarines of the third echelon, without waiting for the return of the last submarines of the second echelon. In order to avoid international complications, the order of the People's Commissar of the Navy now forbade them from attacking ships flying the Swedish flag and any ships in Swedish territorial waters.

The first group of boats of the third echelon (5 units) began leaving the bases on September 15–23, the second (4 units) on October 1–10, and finally the third (7 units) on October 17–November 4. At the same time, L-3, Shch-303, Shch-320, Sh-406, M-96, S-9, S-13 and S-7 broke through the enemy's anti-submarine defense for the second time.

According to commanders' reports, the third echelon submarines "managed to destroy" 15-17 transports and several small warships. WITH

227

returned with victory: S-13 captain 3rd rank V.A. Turaeva, who made the longest military campaign during the war years (58 days) and sank 3 vehicles; D-2 captain 3rd rank R.V. Lindenberg, who sent transport to the bottom and damaged the Deutschland railway ferry (at the same time, the same ferry is listed as "damaged" by mines laid by the L-3 underwater minelayer); Sh-406 captain 3rd rank E.Ya. Osipova, who destroyed 3 ships; From the 9th captain-lieutenant A.I. Mylnikova, who sank the transport and damaged the tanker.

But this time, the mythical successes had to be paid dearly, half of the boats perished. They went missing while crossing anti-submarine lines Shch-302, Shch-304, Shch-306, Shch-320. Finnish boats and patrol boats sank Sh-305, Shch-308, Shch-ZP and Krasnoznamnaya S-7. The commander of the latter, Hero of the Soviet Union SP. Lisin and three of his sailors were captured. The Baltic Fleet lost experienced crews who had repeatedly crossed the Gulf of Finland. The commanders Ya.T. Afanasiev (Sch-304), I.M. Vishnevsky (Sch-320), L.N. Kostylev (Sch 308), V.D. Nechkin (Sch-302), A.S. Pudyakov (Sch-311), D.M. Sazonov (Sch-305), N.I. Smolyar (Sch-306).

Sergei Prokofievich Lisin went through Finnish, German and, as was supposed to be a "traitor of the Motherland", Soviet prisons. The Golden Star was returned to him only in 1958.

Naturally, the sea wolves could not yield to the "boots" in heroism. About how the steady growth of the combat score and the sunk tonnage of the Baltic submariners was achieved, Grishchenko himself, already in retirement, told the St. Petersburg author Oleg Strizhak:

"The darkest and most confusing thing was the score of victories. Pobela needed confirmation. Ideally, that is, according to the instructions, it was necessary to do so. The commander conducts an attack, hits the target. Then he invites two reliable, verified witnesses to the periscope. They look into the optics at the sinking pel, evaluate its class, displacement and confirm that the target has sunk. About what, behind three signatures, the act is written. And such acts were regularly written throughout the war and presented to the authorities, although the last cat in the coastal galley knew that it was all a lie.

It's good if the boat comes across a lonely defenseless layba. You can surface and, smoking, look from the bridge as she sinks. But serious targets are guarded by convoys. The commander managed to enter the attack course unnoticed - his happiness. But the torpels went - the boat found itself. Periscope down! Steep trim on the nose, and falling off, deeper and further away. The guard ships will now cling to you with sonar, plow the depth with a series of bombs.

And the only "confirmation" - they heard an explosion. Or two. Where did the torpedo hit - in the transport? To the security ship? Into the rock? Nobody knows about this on the boat. And if they got into the transport, did he drown or not? And if the transport was drowned - was it great? One commander knows. The commander saw him through the periscope for several seconds, through rain, fog or in the darkness of the night. And the commander

228

returns reports: he drowned a dry cargo ship, twenty thousand tons. Matiyasevich Alexei Mikhailovich, the famous submariner (before the war, the captain of the merchant fleet), argued with the commanders of the boats: "There are no such large ships in the Baltic now! Well, four, well, five thousand tons. And you turned down - twenty!

Boat commanders were offended by him. Matiyasevich himself wrote honestly in his reports: transport, about two thousand tons. For this, the authorities were offended by Matiyasevich. The authorities received orders for their subordinates, and they needed

big wins...

With contempt and mockery, Grishchenko and Matiyasevich spoke of the "outstanding underwater ace" sung by Soviet propaganda, I.V. Travkin. Travkin had eleven victories to his credit, wore the Gold Star. After the war, it turned out that he had only one victory, a small ship. The rest is the fruit of well-thought-out disinformation. Travkin had "reliable witnesses", a paramedic and a commissar. They looked through the periscope, signed the act. Only the attack was false. They shot at the shore, or into the clear sea. The crew guessed, but kept quiet. War is such a thing, you blurt out too much - and you go to the penal company, to die in the Sinyavinsky swamps.

By the way, there was another reason for the "exaggeration" of the results of military campaigns: cash rewards! So, for the sinking of an enemy destroyer or submarine, the commander of a Soviet boat was paid 10,000 rubles (with a monthly salary of 1,500 rubles); for transport - 3000 rubles; for a guard or trawler - 2000 rubles; for a barge, tugboat, schooner - 1000 rubles. *

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See Platonov A.V. Encyclopedia of Soviet submarines 1941-1945. SPb. 2004, p. 78.

The system worked and suited everyone. Anyway: the crew spent weeks sitting in the "pipe", which at any moment could become and often became a common grave, every minute of the campaign was associated with a mortal risk - forgive the military for their "pranks". Another thing is that after the war, a spreading Chronicle of Naval Glory grew out of this "linden tree", under the shadow of which the real history of the Soviet fleet was buried.

The onset of winter and the approach of freeze-up forced submarines to stop operating on communications by the beginning of December and return them to their bases. From June to November 1942, Soviet submariners, having lost 12 submarines, destroyed in the Baltic, according to official data, about 60 enemy ships with a total tonnage of up to 150 thousand tons.

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During the year, M-95, M-97, S-7, Sh-302, Sh-304, Shch-305, Shch-306, Shch-308, Shch 311, Shch-317, Shch 320, Shch-405 were killed.

In fact, KBF submariners, as established by now by reconciling Soviet, German, Finnish and Swedish documents, sank 19 transports with their torpedoes with a total displacement of 47.183 gross registered tons in the whole of 1942. Of these, 5 ships (15.673 tons) were neutral Swedish, 6 were Finnish (12.420 tons) and only 8 (19.090 tons) were German. The largest among them are: the German ship "Eshap @ a" (5.281 tons), the boat "Lembit" heavily damaged on September 14 and sunk a day later; Swedish steamships "Glmea" (5.611 tons) and

229

"S.E. GScheua|sV" (5513 tons).

In addition, two German motor-sailing schooners (387 tons) and a German transport "NtaepBig>" (7.880 tons) were lost on mines laid by Soviet boats. But along with him, not strategic cargoes went to the bottom, but 880 (or even a thousand) Soviet prisoners of war who were in his holds. ***

*** See: Platonov A.V. Encyclopedia of Soviet submarines 1941-1945. St. Petersburg, 2004, With. 534-538.

Rules, in September, the German command had difficulties in organizing the escort service due to the lack of escort ships, as a result of which many transports had accumulated in German and Finnish ports, waiting in line.

230

Chapter 11. OPERATION "ISKRA" (January 12-25, 1943)

In the autumn of 1942, the attention of the whole world was focused on one point of the Soviet German front - Stalingrad. The city has long turned into piles of ruins, the 62nd army of Vasily Ivanovich Chuikov (1900-1982), bleeding, dismembered into three parts, held only a narrow strip of the Volga bank. Both sides continuously built up their forces, and Stalingrad held on, turning into an "all-devouring focus" in which battalions, regiments and divisions of the Wehrmacht were burned. Hitler removed them from other sectors of the front, throwing them into the battle that thundered in the south.

From the beginning of October, the outflow of the most combat-ready formations began from Army Group North. The 8th Air Corps relocated to the Stalingrad region, left for the marshal's baton, and soon General Manstein also ended up near Stalingrad.

The 12th Panzer, 20th Motorized, 269th, 93rd, 291st, 58th and 225th Infantry Divisions left the 18th Army. In return, Lindemann received the 69th Infantry, as well as the 1st, 9th and 10th airfield divisions. The formation of airfield divisions, due to heavy losses in the ground forces, began on the initiative of Goering in the second half of September 1942.

Initially, they did not have a regimental level, but consisted of four rifle battalions and an artillery battalion, they were staffed by personnel of the ground services of the Air Force and anti-aircraft artillery, who did not have the skills of combined arms combat, they had very different weapons, including captured Soviet ones. Thus, the German grouping near Leningrad decreased quantitatively and deteriorated qualitatively.

By the end of 1942, the main forces of the Leningrad Front - the 42nd and 55th armies - were defending at the turn of Uritsk - Pushkin - south of Kolpino - Thresholds. 4 divisions acted against them (215th infantry, 250th Spanish, 5th mountain rifle, SS police division) and the 2nd SS infantry brigade. According to the headquarters of the front, - about 49 thousand soldiers and officers.

The thirty-kilometer strip along the right bank of the Neva from Poroga to Ladoga, with a small foothold in the Moscow Dubrovka area, was held by the 67th Army formed in October on the basis of the Neva Operational Group under the command of Lieutenant General Mikhail Pavlovich Dukhanov (1896-1969).

It initially included the 45th Guards, 46th and 86th Rifle Divisions, the 11th and 55th Rifle Divisions, the 35th Ski Brigade, the 16th Fortified Area, the 86th and 118th Separate Tank Divisions. battalions, eight artillery and mortar regiments. At the same time, the 55th brigade defended the military highway from the south, which passed through the ice of Lake Ladoga.

On the opposite bank of the Neva, the 170th enemy division and a security battalion (up to 11 thousand people) dug in.

231

On the Oranienbaum bridgehead, besieged by the 10th and 9th Luftwaffe airfield divisions (with a total number of up to 10 thousand), there was the Primorsky Operational Group of Major General A.N. Astana, consisting of the 48th, 42nd and 168th rifle divisions, the 48th (former 2nd marine brigade), 71st (former 5th brigade) and 50th (formed on the basis of the 3rd regiment Marines) rifle brigades.

On the Karelian Isthmus, on a 75 km long front, covering the northern approaches to Leningrad, four divisions of the 23rd Army, Major General A.I. Cherepanov. Equally firmly stood opposite the 15th, 10th, 2nd and 18th divisions of the Finnish task force, numbering about 30 thousand people, who did not plan to storm this fortified area at all.

The actions of the ground troops were provided by three air divisions of the 13th Air Army, created in November, Lieutenant General Stepan Dmitrievich Rybalchenko (1903-1986) - 450 aircraft. The Baltic Fleet, based at the mouth of the Neva and Kronstadt, covered the coastal flanks of the troops of the front and supported their actions with its aircraft and artillery fire.

The air defense of the city was carried out by the Leningrad Air Defense Army. The "Road of Life" and transshipment bases on the shores of Lake Ladoga were covered by parts of a separate Ladoga air defense region.

Thus, the blockade ring, in which there were 30 Soviet divisions, was held by 7 German and 4 Finnish infantry divisions.

Volkhov Front, consisting of six combined arms and one air armies (29 rifle, 1 artillery, 3 aviation divisions, 1 fortified area, 8 rifle, 3 ski, 7 tank brigades, breakthrough tank regiment, 7 separate tank battalions, 29 separate artillery and mortar regiments, 4 regiments and 4 divisions of rocket launchers, etc.), under the constant command of K.A. Meretskov, acted in a position unchanged from the moment the front was created - in

300-kilometer strip from Ladoga to Lake Ilmen.

On the front from Lake Ladoga to the Kirov railway there were formations of the 2nd shock and 8th armies. The 14th Air Army had 400 aircraft. On the same line, slightly to the west, 9 enemy divisions dug in from north to south (227, 1, 223, 69, 132, 61, 11, 217, 21st).

All the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts were opposed by the 18th field army of General Lindemann. It consisted of 23 calculated divisions, including 18 infantry, 3 airfield, 1 mountain rifle, plus an SS brigade and separate units of two security divisions - not a single tank, not a single motorized division. THEM, like the entire Army Group North, was supported by 150-200 aircraft of the 1st Air Fleet.

November 22 (near Stalingrad on November 19, Operation Uranus began to defeat

232

grouping of Field Marshal W. von Paulus) The Military Council of the Leningrad Front reported to the Headquarters of the All-Union Command their views on military operations for the winter period. The document specifically stated:

"The Leningrad Front must start preparing, together with the Volkhov Front, an offensive operation with the aim of breaking through the blockade and thereby achieving a decisive change in the operational position of the front ...

Assessing the various directions for striking, we consider it most advantageous to organize a breakthrough of the enemy's front in the Shlisselburg direction with a breakthrough front width of 10 km and for the Volkhov Front, respectively, in the Lipka-Mishkino sector with both fronts striking at Sinyavino.

Stalin approved these proposals on December 2. The specific tasks for the troops of the fronts were determined by the directive of the Headquarters of December 8, 1942:

"With the joint efforts of the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts, defeat the enemy grouping in the area of Lipka, Gaitolovo, Moscow Dubrovka, Shlisselburg, thus breaking the siege of the city of Leningrad, by the end of January 1943, complete the operation. Having secured a strong defense at the turn of the river. Moyka, pos. Mikhailovsky, Tortolovo, provide communications for Leningradsky

front..."

Govorov and Meretskov were instructed to prepare an operation with the code name "Iskra" by January 1, 1943. The coordination of the actions of both fronts was entrusted to the representative of the Headquarters, Marshal K.E. Voroshilov.

The constellation of red strategists did not think of anything else but to gather even more troops and equipment and deliver a powerful frontal blow at the shortest distance - through the Shlisselburg ledge. Only this time they decided to make their way even closer to the Ladoga coast. After covering about six kilometers, the troops of the two fronts were to meet in the area of the railway line that went through the workers' settlements No. 5 and No. 1. Then, turning south, the strike groups were to advance to the line of the Moika River - Tortolovo, reliably providing communications Leningrad front from the south.

After a ten-day rest, in the first half of February, an operation was supposed to follow to defeat the enemy in the Mga region and clear the Kirov railway with access to the Voronovo-Sigolovo-Voitolovo-Voskresenskoye line.

Naturally, the conditions of the area over the past months have not become better, and the Germans have invested all their free time, strength and skill in improving the "Ladoga fortress". They adapted the working settlements with stone buildings located along the roads for all-round defense, turning the entire space around them into a continuous fortified zone with a developed network of trenches, trenches, shelters, dugouts, reinforced concrete walls, wood-and-earth fences and ramparts, saturated with fire weapons and densely mined. In fact, the entire territory of the ledge turned into a continuous fortified area.

233

This "problem" was planned to be solved simply and unpretentiously: 22 rifle divisions, 14 rifle and ski divisions, 7 tank brigades, numbering more than 300 thousand soldiers and commanders, with the support of 530 tanks, 5300 guns and mortars, 1000 aircraft 13- 1st and 14th airborne armies, the Baltic Fleet Air Force and long-range aviation.

The enemy grouping in the Shlisselburg-Sinyavino ledge consisted of four divisions of the 26th Army Corps and one regiment of the 5th Mountain Rifle Division; according to Soviet data - 60 thousand people, about 700 guns and mortars, up to 50 tanks and assault guns.

In preparation for the operation, the Soviet side applied an operational "novelty": for the first time (!) In 16 months of the blockade, after four failed attempts to break through, the commanders of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts met, coordinated their actions, established demarcation lines and mutual identification signals. They even agreed that if the troops of one of the fronts fail to reach the line planned for them, then the troops of the other "do not stop their movement, but continue to move towards them until the connection."

The situation on the Leningrad front by the beginning of 1943

Seeing a worthy example of the authorities, aviators and gunners began to make friends with the headquarters. The first distributed objects for attacks and developed a "shuttle" method of action, which consisted in the fact that the planes of the 14th Air Army, after striking targets, landed on the airfields of the Leningrad Front, where

refueled, received a bomb load and flew out for a second strike. The aviation of the 13th Air Army did the same. The latter pledged to help each other with fire and fulfill the orders of the rifle troops, regardless of front-line affiliation. For the first time, command posts of the air armies were located near the command post of the commanders of the breakthrough armies.

It was also unusual that almost a month was allocated for preparation, during which it was necessary to accumulate forces and means, to carry out their covert regrouping and concentration, "to teach troops to break through heavily fortified positions in a wooded and swampy area, put together units, work out issues of interaction between infantry with aircraft, tanks and artillery.

For training sessions and training in the rear, training fields and special towns were equipped. Leningraders at the Toksovsky training ground created a defense line similar to the one that was to be broken through. Regimental exercises with live firing were held here, the infantry was trained to follow the fire shaft at a distance of 100 meters. On sections of the Neva in the city limits, they worked out ways to overcome damaged areas of ice, storming a steep, icy, fortified shore with bunkers.

Troops on the Volkhov front also underwent similar training, where they formed 83 assault detachments, including sappers, machine gunners,

234

machine gunners, flamethrowers, cannons and escort tanks. Particular attention was paid to the development of methods for storming wood-and-earth fences, peat, snow and ice ramparts. It was more difficult with questions of interaction between the combat arms, they were managed to be more or less coordinated only for the initial period of the battle.

The most time-consuming work was the preparation of initial areas for shock groupings of fronts. It was necessary to increase the number of trenches and communication passages, shelters for personnel, open and equip firing positions for artillery, mortars, tanks, and arrange ammunition depots. The total volume of earthworks on each front was in the hundreds of thousands of cubic meters. All work was carried out only by hand, at night, without violating the normal behavior of the troops occupying the defense, in compliance with camouflage measures. At the same time, sappers were building roads and columned paths, gati and lezhnevka through the swamps, which abounded in the initial areas, cleared minefields, and prepared passages in the barriers.

To the north of Novgorod, the Volkhovites imitated violent activity, indicating a false concentration of a large mass of troops and equipment, and regularly carried out reconnaissance in force.

On the Lenfront, it was also necessary to make means to overcome the high bank of the Neva and areas of damaged ice cover. For this purpose, hundreds of board shields, assault ladders, hooks, ropes with hooks and "cats" were made. After considering a number of options (including creating a canal in the ice of the Neva with the subsequent construction of a pontoon bridge, or reinforcing the ice by freezing cables into it), it was decided to transport tanks across the Neva and

heavy artillery on wooden "rails" laid on sleepers.

From December 15 to December 18, General Govorov held a military game on the topic: "Breakthrough of the prepared enemy defense by the combined arms army with the crossing of the river in winter conditions." The game was based on the "real situation" in the zone of the upcoming offensive, as far as it was represented in the Soviet headquarters, mainly according to aerial photography.

But in reality, this time too, the headquarters had rather meager information about the German defense. Perhaps for the commanders of the fronts, a bird's-eye view of enemy positions was quite enough. Meretskov, for example, proudly reports that aerial photography "laid rich material," but at the level of a machine-gun embrasure, the view opens up somewhat differently, and the search for enemy bunkers with the help of aircraft is a waste of fuel. Meanwhile, this was limited. The researcher of the operation "Iskra" Colonel V.M. Yarhunov writes:

"The commanders of units and formations did not care that, before the start of the offensive, the nature of the enemy's defense, its strengths and weaknesses were completely revealed, the groupings, combat composition and combat capability of the enemy were revealed.

Often commanders based their decisions on aerial photography data without specifying them by means of ground reconnaissance. This led, especially in wooded areas, to a superficial and incomplete study of the enemy.

235

As a result, the commanders of subunits and units deprived themselves of the opportunity to make a decision appropriate to the situation. Shortcomings in the conduct of reconnaissance led to the fact that the troops constantly ran into all sorts of surprises.

By the end of December, preparations for the operation were basically completed. However, due to a sudden thaw, the ice cover on the Neva was not strong enough, and the swamps were difficult to pass. Therefore, on December 27, the front commanders turned to the Headquarters with a request to postpone the start of the offensive to January 10-12, 1943. Consent has been received. Marshal Meretskov points out that it would be more correct to start active operations in general in February, but once again "Leningrad could not wait so long."

By November 1942 the city. almost depopulated. As a result of mass mortality, evacuation and additional conscriptions, the population of Leningrad decreased by 2 million in one year and amounted to 650 thousand people, of which 80% worked. The food problem was solved, there were no interruptions in the supply of food to the population. According to Professor A.T. Veselov, before the blockade was broken, 270,000 Leningraders received an increased food ration compared to the all-Union, in addition, 153,000 people attended canteens with three meals a day.

The death rate of the population was approximately 3.5 thousand people per month. In autumn, a cable was laid along the bottom of Lake Ladoga, through which the city received

electricity from Volkhovskaya HPP. Fuel continued to flow through the summer pipeline.

On October 22, the Germans tried to land troops on Sukho Island, the battery of which covered the Ladoga highway, but the joint actions of the garrison under the command of Senior Lieutenant I.K. Gusev, the ships of the Ladoga Flotilla and the fleet aviation were repulsed with considerable losses.

Since mid-December, the operation of the ice military road was resumed, which functioned around the clock. The construction of a 35-kilometer railway overpass across Lake Ladoga was begun, day and night, multi-meter piles were continuously driven, which were installed every two meters. In the diary of the instructor of the party committee of the Kirov plant L.1. Galko has an entry dated December 27, 1942:

"I visited the city. I tried to briefly compare the situation today with the situation on December 27, 1941. Togla was carried on the streets on a sled wrapped in rags of the dead. The people could hardly walk, they fell from exhaustion, the water pipes did not work, there was no lighting. Today the situation is completely different. In the morning I went to the city after breakfast and felt full. At the Narva Gate I took a tram (last year I went with

zavola

on foot). In the tram, people are talking animatedly, it is felt that they are not hungry ... Since December 15, electric light has appeared in a number of districts in residential buildings.

Therefore, in principle, if it would benefit the cause and allow completely

236

to achieve its goals, Leningrad could wait a month or two. In any case, the Soviet troops received another two weeks to prepare and the opportunity to calmly meet the new year 1943, and at the same time take stock of the past year. If in general for the country and the Red Army it was notable, on the one hand, for catastrophic summer defeats in the south, and on the other hand, for the strategic Stalingrad victory, then there was nothing to brag about on the northern wing of the Soviet-German front.

For the whole of 1942, the Germans did not conduct a single offensive operation here. Soviet armies attacked almost daily. As a result, the total losses of the Leningrad Front amounted to more than 319 thousand killed and wounded. At this price, they managed to liberate the villages of Putrolovo and Yam-Izhora, plus, in addition, occupy a piece of land soaked in blood, stuffed with metal near Moscow Dubrovka. The Volkhov Front lost 592 thousand people. Meretskov convinces that this is normal:

"This is one of the features of the military profession. To save millions, we throw tens of thousands of people into battle, knowing that many thousands will die. When in

The leader plans the operation, he not only understands that there will be human casualties,

but it also provides for approximately possible losses, since it does not want to miscalculate and then incur even greater losses as a result of underestimating a number of factors. Such is the logic of war... I have always been very worried about any losses. I am compelled to say this here, even if someone will chastise it as an inherent weakness in me.

All of them, of course, are abstractly sorry, but their own shirt is closer to the body. Due to the inherent "weakness" of the commander and due to the "peculiarities" of his professional training, the Volkhov Front in 1942 lost 170 percent of its original personnel (!) And became the absolute champion among all Soviet fronts in terms of such an indicator as the percentage of losses to the number of personnel, overtaking even the Western and Stalingrad!

Interestingly, Meretskov foresaw this, "planning operations"? The results of the year were miserable: the village of Pogostye was taken and the village of Gaitolovo was left, and as for the millions he saved, the marshal (in the period described - the general) clearly "turned down".

Marshal Voroshilov reported to Moscow:

"The preparation does not raise any doubts about the successful outcome of the operation. About "Iskra", by all indications, until the enemy is savvy.

But Voroshilov's benevolence rather alarmed than reassured Stalin, and he, just in case, decided to send G.K. Zhukov, "to see if everything is done." On January 10, 1943, General of the Army Zhukov, a Stavka representative, arrived at the Volkhov Front, met with Voroshilov and Zhdanov, and visited the command posts of the 8th and 2nd shock armies. The next day, he heard reports from the chiefs of the armed forces on the readiness for the operation, made several remarks about the use of artillery and tanks.

237

On the night of January 11, the troops took their starting position. The Leningrad Front dealt the main blow with the forces of the 67th Army (commander M.P. Dukhanov) in the area between the 8th hydroelectric power station and Shlisselburg in the direction of Maryino - workers' settlement No. 5 - Sinyavino. The general intention was as follows:

Combat operations of the 268th rifle division in the 8th district of the 8th hydroelectric power station from January 12 to 21, 1943

"Defending the right bank of the Neva and the ice track of Lake Ladoga by units of the 46th Rifle Division, the 55th Rifle and 35th Ski Brigades and the 16th Fortified Region, cross the Neva River along the glacier, break through the enemy defenses on the front of Moscow Dubrovka, Shlisselburg and, delivering the main blow in the general direction to Sinyavino, destroy the Sinyavino-Shlisselburg grouping of the enemy and capture the strongholds of Arbuzovo, elev. 22.4, Work settlement No. 1 and Shlisselburg. In the future, establish a common front with the oncoming strike force of the Volkhov Front and develop an attack to the southeast.

Army of General M.P. Dukhanov had 7 rifle divisions, 6 rifle, 2 ski and 3 tank brigades, 28th artillery division, 5th heavy guards mortar brigade, 3 rocket artillery regiments, 22 artillery and mortar regiments, a large number of separate divisions and batteries. The total number of troops was more than 133 thousand people, 222 tanks, 1873 guns and mortars. The density of artillery reached 150 barrels per kilometer of the front, twice the same indicator during the counteroffensive near Stalingrad.

In order to reliably suppress the enemy's manpower and firepower on the front line and not damage the ice cover on the Neva, 286 guns were exposed to direct fire. In addition, 88 naval guns with a caliber from 130 to 406 mm were brought in to assist the troops of the 67th Army.

The operational formation of the army was planned in two echelons: in the first, the 45th Guards, 286th, 136th and 86th rifle divisions, the 61st tank brigade, the 86th and 118th tank battalions (140 light tanks capable of crossing the river without additional ice reinforcement); in the second - the 13th and 123rd divisions, the 102nd, 123rd and 142nd rifle, 152nd and 220th tank brigades; in reserve - 11th, 55th and 138th rifle, 34th ski brigades.

The 46th Rifle Division and the 35th Ski Brigade took up defensive positions on the right bank of the Neva on the flanks of the army. Tanks, in view of the shallow depth of the operation and unsuitable terrain, the commander decided to use for the direct escort of the infantry.

These forces were opposed by the 328th Infantry Regiment of the 227th Infantry Division of General von Scotty, the 170th Infantry Division of General Zander in full force and the 100th Regiment of the 5th Mountain Division, which had up to 30 tanks, about 400 mortars and guns. The defensive line of the Germans passed along the left bank of the Neva, the height of which reaches 12 meters. The coast was artificially iced, heavily mined, and had almost no convenient natural exits.

238

The Germans had two powerful knots of resistance. One - the buildings of the 8th hydroelectric power station, brick houses of the 1st and 2nd towns; the second - the numerous buildings of Shlisselburg and its outskirts. For every kilometer of the front, there were 10-12 bunkers and up to 30 guns and mortars, and trenches of a full profile stretched along the entire bank of the Neva.

The middle defensive line passed through the workers' settlements No. 1 and No. 5, the Podgornaya and Sinyavino stations, the workers' settlement No. 6, and the Mikhailovsky settlement. There were two lines of trenches, a Sinyavino knot of resistance, cut-off positions, and strong points. This line was the position of the divisional reserves (up to one regiment) of the German group.

From the Sinyavin Heights, the southern coast of Lake Ladoga (it was defended by the reconnaissance battalion of the 227th Infantry Division), Shlisselburg, the 8th hydroelectric power station and the work settlement No. 5 were clearly visible.

railway line between Sinyavino and the 8th hydroelectric power station, was shot through by flanking and crossfire.

The Volkhov Front, which managed to receive five more rifle divisions, concentrated its main efforts on its right flank. There, the 2nd shock army delivered the main blow (12 rifle divisions, 4 rifle and ski divisions, 4 tank brigades, 4 separate tank battalions, 21 artillery and mortar regiments, 2 engineering brigades and 6 separate engineer battalions).

Since December, it was commanded by Lieutenant General Vladimir Zakharovich Romanovsky (1896-1967).

The army was to break through the enemy defenses in the sector of the village of Lipka - Gaytolovo and, developing the offensive in the direction of the workers' settlement No. 8 - Sinyavino, unite with the troops of the Leningrad Front. From the north, the 12th ski brigade was to make a detour on the ice of Lake Ladoga and attack the enemy west of the village of Lipka. The breakthrough front was 12 km, and the army delivered the main blow on a 6-kilometer section. In the future, it was necessary to develop the offensive in a southerly direction.

To reinforce the troops, four anti-aircraft artillery divisions, ten mortar regiments, and two rocket artillery regiments were formed in December; The headquarters allocated more than 80 echelons of ammunition. 2885 guns and mortars were involved in the operation, having accumulated 4-6 ammunition (also for the first time). An average density of 160 barrels was achieved on each kilometer of the breakthrough area, more than 200 in the direction of the main attack, and 360 guns and mortars in the area opposite the Kruglaya grove. Up to 300 guns were put forward for direct fire.

The 2nd shock army was built in two echelons. The first - 128, 372, 256, 327, 314, 376th rifle divisions, reinforced by artillery regiments and sapper units, 122nd tank brigade and 32nd breakthrough tank guards regiment, 501st, 502nd, 503rd and 507th tank battalions. The second - 18, 191, 71, 11, 239th rifle divisions, 16th, 98th and 185th tank brigades. Combined Arms Reserve - 147th Infantry Division,

239

22nd rifle, 11th, 12th and 13th ski brigades.

The actions of the 2nd shock army, numbering almost 140 thousand people, were supported by 2100 guns and mortars, more than 500 M-8 and M 30 rocket launchers, 217 tanks. Here were concentrated the 2nd artillery division of the RVGK, two

heavy guards mortar brigades M-30 and four guards mortar regiments M-13.

The 8th army of General Starikov, numbering over 52 thousand fighters and commanders, with its right-flank formations (80, 265, 286, 364th divisions and the 73rd naval rifle brigade) was supposed to break through the enemy's defenses on

section Gaitolovo - Mishino and advance in the direction of Tortolovo - the village of Mikhailovsky. They were supported by 785 guns and mortars, as well as 92 tanks in the 25th breakthrough regiment, 107th and 502nd tank battalions.

The 227th Infantry Division (without one regiment), the 1st Infantry Division, the 374th Regiment of the 207th Security Division and the 425th Regiment of the 223rd Infantry were defending against two armies of the Volkhov Front. The defensive line of the enemy passed from the village of Lipka through the workers' settlement No. 8, Roshu Kruglaya, Gaitolovo, Mishino, Voronovo and further south.

There was a continuous trench along the front line of defense, covered with minefields, gouges and barbed wire, and a second trench was also dug in some areas. Where the swampy terrain did not allow to go deep into the ground, the Germans erected ice and bulk ramparts, put up double-layer log fences. Lipka, the workers' settlement No. 8, the Kruglaya rosha, the villages of Gaitolovo and Tortolovo were turned into especially powerful nodes of resistance.

On the night before the offensive, Soviet aviation delivered massive strikes against enemy positions in the breakthrough zone, airfields and railway junctions. Meetings and rallies of personnel were held in all regiments, battalions and companies.

At 09:30 on the morning of January 12, 1943, 4,800 barrels hit simultaneously. Artillery preparation in the zone of the 67th Army lasted 2 hours 20 minutes, in the zone of the 2nd Shock Army - 1 hour 45 minutes. A wall of fire and smoke, rising above the German positions, covered the entire horizon. Towards the end, despite adverse weather conditions, thousands of bombs were dropped by the aviation of the 13th and 14th air armies.

At 11.15, turning on the loudspeakers at full volume with the melody "Get up, the country is huge", the Volkhov divisions went on the offensive. After 35 minutes, the advanced units of the Leningraders rolled onto the Neva ice to the sounds of the Internationale and under the cover of a fire shaft.

Each Soviet division of the first echelon was cut into a three-kilometer section of the breakthrough, where one rifle division with a tank battalion attached to it was opposed by one German regiment. The famous Russian attack began: in thick chains, wave after wave, to the last soldier:

240

"In close formation on one line, they quickly walked across the Neva along an absolutely even, snow-covered glacier. There was less than a meter between them. Ahead are the real heroes - the sailors of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, detachments of sappers with their mine detectors could hardly keep up with them (in the divisions of the 67th Army, assault groups were staffed from sailors).

In the trenches near Maryino, soldiers of the 2nd Battalion of the 401st Grenadier Regiment observed the same picture.

"They've gone crazy," they said. The gunners of the 240th motorcycle squadron, holding a position on the shore to the right of the town hospital, shouted to each other: "They think they killed us all!" And they grabbed their machine guns even tighter ...

A terrible shaft of fire from Russian artillery moved far inland. In the meantime, forward observers of the German artillery were bending over the radios, calling their batteries and regiments, passing them new targets: "Square barrage" ...

A moment later, shells from field howitzers and guns howled over the German positions and fell on the ice of the Neva, a curtain of fire and steel descended in front of the German strongholds ... German machine guns rumbled. Mortars hit, rifle shots roared. As if knocked down, the attackers fell on the ice. Many got up again. Let's run. "Hurrah!" But only a few people reached the icy river bank. There they came under aimed fire from German infantrymen. They fled or died.

A second wave appeared on the ice. Then the third, fourth and fifth. In front of the hospital and power plant on the Neva, the dead and wounded lay in large black piles. Wave after wave choked, mostly not even reaching the broken steel beams in the steep bank. The Soviet commanders, who studied the enemy's defenses from photographic schemes, almost immediately "stumbled upon surprises." On the right flank, in the offensive sector of the 45th Guards Rifle Division, commanded by the Hero of the Soviet Union, Major General A.A. Krasnov, the gunners were unable to suppress the long-term firing points of the enemy, because they were unaware of their existence. When crossing the river, the regiments suffered heavy losses; out of 30 vehicles of the 118th separate tank battalion, less than half reached the opposite bank. During the day of stubborn attacks on the positions of Colonel Grizbakh's 399th Infantry Regiment, Krasnov's division captured only small sections of the first defensive line and slightly expanded the Nevsky bridgehead. The fighting took on a protracted character.

Failure also befell the left-flank 86th Infantry Division under the command of Hero of the Soviet Union Colonel V.A. Trubachev, advancing on Shlisselburg. The Germans met her with heavy artillery fire, mortars and machine guns. The regiments of the first echelon that crossed the Neva north of Maryino lay on the ice, not reaching the left bank and suffering significant losses.

268th Infantry Division under the command of Colonel S.N. Borshchev, who replaced Major General SI in this position. Donskova, successfully crossed the Neva with all regiments and attacked the positions of the 391st Infantry Regiment. to the end

241

In the afternoon, the Soviet units advanced 3 km north of the 2nd town, but they failed to surround and destroy the enemy in the local center of resistance.

The greatest success on the first day was achieved by the 136th Rifle Division, commanded by Major General Nikolai Pavlovich Simonyak (1901-1956). With a swift and unified attack, her regiments reached the eastern bank of the river with relatively small losses and captured Maryino almost from the hole. General

Dukhanov brought in the bulk of the artillery from the army group to support units of this division and handed over one more tank battalion to it. By evening, General Simonyak captured a bridgehead 3 km along the front and in depth.

Army sappers began building ice crossings for medium and heavy tanks. Trubachev's division, on the orders of the commander, withdrew to its original positions, and by the end of the day crossed the Neva in the sector of the 136th rifle division in order to turn around from behind its left flank in the morning to launch an offensive in the direction of the workers' settlement No. 3.

During the fighting on January 12, the troops of the 67th Army captured 33 enemy soldiers and officers, losing up to 3,000 people killed and wounded. The flank divisions suffered particularly heavy losses. In the area of the Nevsky "piglet", the Germans dismantled the rubble from Russian corpses at night in order to provide sectors of fire for their machine guns.

In the 2nd shock army of the Volkhov Front, the greatest success was achieved by part of the 327th rifle division of Colonel N.A. Polyakov. They broke into the rosha of Krug Laya, pushing the 366th regiment of the 227th Infantry Division, which was still commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Wengler. The Germans, who desperately resisted, knocked out about 50 Soviet KVs and "thirty-fours", another 15 vehicles sank in the swamp.

To the right, the 256th Infantry Division of Colonel F.S. tried to overcome the system of icy ramparts. Fetisov, ensuring the success of a neighbor. Even further north, the 372nd division under the command of Colonel P.I. Radygina and the 98th Tank Brigade fought all day for the workers' settlement No. 8, which was defended by the 2nd Battalion of the 374th Grenadier Regiment under the command of Major Ziegler. Peat quarries, even in winter conditions, turned out to be completely impassable for tanks, which were never able to turn around from marching formation to combat.

By the end of the first day of the offensive, individual divisions of the Romanovsky army managed to advance 2-3 km. The distance between the 67th Army and the 2nd Shock Army was reduced to 8 km. General Lindeman hastily advanced to the area of Mustolovo - the working settlement No. 6 - Sinyavino the nearest operational reserves - parts of the 96th and 61st Infantry Divisions. Soviet aviation received the task of preventing the approach of German reserves, but failed to cope with this task.

On the morning of January 13, the fighting took on a particularly stubborn and fierce character. The enemy now provided not only fire resistance, but also, relying on the nodes of resistance, continuously counterattacked, trying to restore the lost position. Barely right-flank regiment of the 45th Guards

The division tried to move the offensive east of Moscow Dubrovka, as it was attacked by two enemy battalions. After the regiment repulsed the counterattack, the Germans soon repeated it, but from two directions and with a force of up to three infantry battalions. As a result, the guardsmen of General Krasnov repulsed all attacks, but they themselves did not advance a single step. Did not bring the desired results the second day of fighting and the 86th Infantry Division.

The course of hostilities of the 67th Prize on January 8, 1943

The 286th Rifle Division resumed its offensive, by 1500 it advanced 1.5-2 km, but at that moment the Germans, having thrown into battle the battalions of the 96th Infantry Division of General Nöldechen, a battery of 88-mm anti-aircraft guns and a dozen tanks, hit her on the flank from the area of the 2nd town and forced them to retreat to their original positions.

The T-UT tanks from the 1st company of the 502nd tank battalion, which made an unsuccessful debut in September, were involved here. This time they showed their best side: according to German data, four "tigers" knocked out 16 Soviet tanks, while losing one car. The Soviet division lost about one and a half thousand people.

The artillery attached to the division was unable to provide effective assistance in repulsing the counterattack, since its advanced observation posts still remained on the right bank of the Neva. The fire was fired at the squares, a lot of shells were used up, but the combat effect was very low and only "thanks to the heroic efforts of several batteries, the German tanks did not break through to the crossings."

Due to the low level of organization of firing at specific targets, Soviet artillery was distinguished by a fantastic amount of expendable ammunition, hence, as a result, it experienced constant shell hunger. General F. Mellenthin, who arrived on the Eastern Front from Libya, noted:

"They had cannons and shells, and they loved to use these shells ... However, Russian artillery also had shortcomings. For example, the inflexibility of fire plans was sometimes simply amazing.

Only the 136th division again managed to "gnaw" another 3-4 km in the direction of the workers' settlement No. 5 in the day. In the evening, the commander-67 brought the 123rd rifle brigade into action to cover the left flank of General Simonyak. The 284th rifle regiment of the 86th division, bypassing Shlisselburg from the south, reached the workers' settlement No. 3.

As a result of two days of fighting, the troops of the 67th Army captured a bridgehead up to 10 km along the front and 7 km in depth. However, almost all strongholds and centers of resistance remained in the hands of the enemy.

Engineer troops energetically built ice crossings for heavy equipment. The right-flank was discovered by the Germans and destroyed by artillery and mortar fire. The northern crossing was completed,

243

but she was immediately out of action: the first tank, having violated the rules for overcoming the river, broke it and sank itself.

The central crossing remained in the Maryino area, which entered service on the night of February 14. By dawn, heavy and medium vehicles of the 152nd tank brigade of Colonel P.I. crossed the Neva along it. Pinchuk. At the same time, General Dukhanov decided to strike from the side of Lake Ladoga with the forces of the 55th Infantry Brigade in the direction of the workers' settlement No. 3, with the task of assisting the units of the 86th Infantry Division surrounded by the enemy in Shlisselburg.

The Germans began to transfer units of the 5th Mountain Rifle Division to the breakthrough site.

The formations of the 2nd shock army were also subjected to fierce counterattacks. Particularly fierce fighting took place in the area of the village of Lipka, workers' settlements No. 7 and No. 8. In this situation, General Romanovsky brought into battle in the direction of the workers' settlement No. 5 the 18th rifle division of Major General M.N. Ovchinnikov and the 98th Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel E.G. Paikin, and to the south of the Kruglaya grove - the 71st division of Major General N.M. Zamirovsky.

The commander of the 12th ski brigade (its core was sailors from the North Sea), Lieutenant Colonel N.A. Sebov was given the task of advancing from the Bugrovsky lighthouse to the southern shore of Lake Ladoga, to Lipka and the workers' settlement No. 1. To do this, he had to overcome about 6 km of the open space of Ladoga and break through the enemy's fortifications and barriers on the Ladoga canals.

During the first two days of the offensive, the troops of the Volkhov Front broke through the enemy defenses on a 10-kilometer stretch from Lipki to Gaitolovo, but did not capture a single stronghold. Every day, the Soviet troops participating in the operation lost more than 6 thousand people killed, wounded, missing.

On January 14, the 67th and 2nd shock armies brought into battle most of the forces of the second echelons, but they could not completely turn the tide in their favor. At the same time, the formations of the first echelon did not change, but simply compacted the battle formations, shortened the offensive lines and continued the battle. Yarhunov writes:

"The withdrawal of troops to their original position was carried out in a disorganized manner, the camouflage was broken. These shortcomings led to the fact that the troops, even in their initial position, suffered significant losses and lost the necessary impact force before the attack began ... Some commanders at the beginning of the battle let go of the control of the battle, stopped monitoring the situation and its changes and did not give the troops any orders. This led to the fact that the troops acted independently, the control of the battle was violated, which, of course, apart from losses and failures, could not give anything significant.

The second-echelon formations were used unsuccessfully, in parts, on a wide front, they were poorly managed and simply "hurt in a heap". So, on the right flank of the 67th Army, in the zone of the 45th Guards Division, the 13th

division, commanded by Colonel V.P. Yakutovich, and then the 142nd Infantry Brigade of Colonel N.A. Koshchlenko. They attacked on the front from the northern outskirts of Arbuzov to Moscow Dubrovka, but were not successful.

The 102nd Rifle Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel A.V., entered the battle north of the 2nd town. Baltuka had the task of bypassing the Gorodok junction from the east and connecting with the left flank regiment of the 13th division. But, met by strong enemy fire, she remained at the starting line. Parts of the 268th Rifle Division were trampling around on the spot.

123rd division of Colonel A.P. Ivanov with the 152nd tank brigade went on the offensive in the direction of the workers' settlement No. 6. However, the interaction of infantry with tanks and artillery was not established, escort guns and artillery observers remained in the rear, heavy KVs were launched through the swamp, as a result, they managed to overcome only one kilometer.

The main battles unfolded on the outskirts of the workers' settlement No. 5, defended by the 374th von Belov Grenadier Regiment. Here, constantly attacking and repelling counterattacks, Simonyak's division fought with the 61st tank brigade attached to it. The account of the territory recaptured from the enemy went to meters. The 123rd Rifle Brigade was on the defensive at the southern edge of the Lilia Grove, covering the left flank of the 136th Division.

Two regiments of Trubachev's division tried to close the ring around Shlisselburg, but lay in the snow under German fire on the outskirts of the workers' settlement No.

The 2nd battalion of the 55th rifle brigade, advancing from the side of Lake Ladoga, by 10 o'clock overcame the enemy's barriers on the southern coast and reached the Staro Ladoga Canal. However, he did not receive support, was surrounded by the Germans and broke back on the night of January 15.

The troops of the 2nd Shock Army, together with the second-echelon formations put into battle (a total of 9 divisions and 3 tank brigades), fought at the turn of the workers' settlement No. 7 - Lipka, moving forward slightly. Ziegler's battalion continued to hold out in the workers' settlement No. 8 in complete encirclement.

On January 15, the 67th Army advanced only in the main direction with the forces of the 136th Infantry Division and the 123rd Infantry Brigade. There was no promotion anywhere. The remaining formations of the army repulsed enemy counterattacks and consolidated on occupied lines. The Germans, having pulled up two regimental groups of the 61st Infantry Division of General Huner from the Pogostye region during the night, in the morning brought them into battle in the Sinyavino region and the workers' settlement No. 5.

A position of precarious equilibrium arose in the area of the breakthrough. Meretskov and Romanovsky, in turn, threw the 239th Infantry Division of Major General P.N. Chernyshev from the front reserve, the 11th Division of Colonel E.I. Marchenko, two ski and one tank brigades.

Near Shlisselburg, the commander of the 330th regiment of the 86th rifle division, Colonel G.I. In the middle, insight descended and he made a "bold and very reasonable decision": to bypass the enemy's stronghold on Preobrazhenskaya Gora from the east and hit the Germans in the flank and rear. Why the decision was reasonable is understandable, a smart one will not go uphill, especially if the mountain is studded with firing points, the embrasures of which look exactly to the west. But the colonel needed courage to show the most punishable quality in the USSR - initiative. After all, the authorities ordered not to bypass, but to "take possession". But as a result of the courage of the chief, by noon on January 15, Seredin's regiment occupied both the mountain and the southwestern outskirts of the city. The next day, the shock group of the 67th Army broke from the west into the workers' settlement No. 5, however, they could not take it.

On the site of the 2nd shock army, Fetisov's 256th division made a breakthrough, breaking the enemy's resistance south of the village, broke through the second defensive line and captured the Podgornaya railway station. Now the fronts were separated by no more than 2 km.

The German units located in the areas of Shlisselburg, Lipka and in the forests south of Lake Ladoga were under the threat of encirclement and destruction. In this regard, the retention of workers' settlements No. 5 and No. 1, through which the only road to Mgu passed from north to south, acquired special importance for them. Units of the 96th and 61st Infantry Divisions kept their wrappers here. The battalion of Major Ziegler, left without ammunition and food, secretly left the workers' settlement No. 8 at night and imperceptibly "leaked" through the Soviet kolpo to the south.

Fierce fighting unfolded for Shlisselburg, where the 1st battalion of the 328th infantry regiment of the 227th division sat down. For three days, fighting for each building, the city was stormed by the 330th regiment, and the 34th ski brigade of Lieutenant Colonel Ya.F. Potekhin was advancing at that time along the narrow gauge railway in order to cut off the escape routes of the German garrison in the southeast direction. The difficulty here was that the road was fortified with numerous pillboxes, and the Potekhin brigade, recently formed from 17-18-year-old Leningrad youths and thrown into battle for the first time, had only 45-mm guns and 82-mm mortars to suppress the firing points.

At dawn on the sixth day of Operation Iskra, units of the 372nd Infantry Division and the 122nd Tank Brigade approached the workers' settlement No. 1 and the narrow-gauge railway to the south of it. The 18th Division and the 98th Tank Brigade approached Workers' Settlement No. 5, which was under continuous fire from more than 500 guns and mortars. The 128th division on this day broke the resistance of the enemy in Lipka. The success here was facilitated by the roundabout maneuver of the 12th Ski Brigade.

By the end of January 17, the troops of the Volkhov Front captured the workers' settlement No. 4 and the Sinyavino station. The corridor separating the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts became very narrow, less than one kilometer. But this last kilometer proved to be the most difficult. The battle took on an exceptionally fierce character. General Huner held the neck to the last, ensuring the exit of the German units from the Ladoga "bottle" to the south, to the Sinyavin heights.

Finally, at 9.30 on January 18, 1943, the 123rd Rifle Brigade of the Leningrad Front, after a decisive attack, captured the workers' settlement No. 1, and its first battalion met with the first battalion of the 1240th regiment of the 372nd rifle division of the Volkhov Front. At this time, units of the 136th division bypassed the workers' settlement No. 5 from the south and north. And here at 11.45 there was a meeting of the soldiers of the 269th regiment of the 136th division with the forward units of the 424th rifle regiment of the 18th rifle division.

Units of the 34th Ski Brigade, having beaten off several enemy counterattacks from the southeastern outskirts of Shlisselburg, reached the Staro-Ladoga Canal by 10 o'clock. Turning their front to the west, they blocked all exits for the enemy troops remaining in the city. In the afternoon, in the village of Lipki, scout skiers met with soldiers of the 128th Infantry Division and the 12th Ski Brigade of the Volkhov Front.

Battalions of the 330th Infantry Regiment of the 86th Division and armored cars from the 61st Tank Brigade liberated Shlisselburg by 4 p.m. And by the end of the day, the entire southern coast of Lake Ladoga, 8 to 11 km wide, was cleared of German troops. True, a significant part of the enemy grouping (approximately 8,000 soldiers and officers), abandoning heavy weapons, managed to escape from the bag to a new defensive line, hastily created north of Sinyavino and along the line of the Moika River. This line has already been occupied by the 2nd regiment of the SS police division, the rangers of the 5th mountain rifle division and the regiments of the 1st infantry division deployed to the north. The 28th Chasseur was on the way. The 21st and 11th Infantry Divisions arrived in the area of Mga and Sinyavino.

According to Soviet data, the Germans lost more than 13 thousand people killed and 1261 captured in the Shlisselburg-Sinyavino ledge. Trophies amounted to 222 guns, 178 mortars, 512 machine guns, 9 armored vehicles, 26 tanks. Including one "tiger", which was captured in the area of Workers' settlement No. 5 by soldiers of the 18th Infantry Division and sent to Moscow for detailed study.

Here is what Marshal G.K. Zhukov, who received the highest degree for Iskra

military rank:

Breaking the blockade of Leningrad on January 12-18, 1943

"In the course of the operation, the observation post of the commander of the 2nd shock army, where we were, moved to the area of village No. 1. I saw with what joy the soldiers of the fronts that had broken the blockade rushed towards each other."

In general, according to the marshal, the entire operation from the moment it began until the moment of the breakthrough, he was at the command post of General Romanovsky. Allegedly, under his personal control and almost with personal participation, the most valuable trophy was pulled out from the neutral zone - an "experimental model of the new heavy Tiger tank No.

But here's what's interesting. It is always pleasant to write about your victories, and many Soviet generals left memoirs about the operation. That's just Georgy Konstantinovich, as that Krylov's elephant, none of them "noted". For example, General Kalashnikov, head of the political department of the Volkhov Front recalls:

"On the evening of January 17, K.A. arrived at the command post of the 2nd shock army, a few kilometers from the village. Meretskov, I.I. Fedyuninsky, V.Z. Romanovsky, L.Z. Mehlis. I was there too. The details of the meeting with the troops of the Leningrad

front."

Oddly enough, he did not notice Zhukov. Meretskov did not remember anything about Zhukov's participation either. To all appearances, neither the deputy front commander, General Fedyuninsky, had ever seen Zhukov, although he did not fail to note that on the evening of January 17, "I was sitting in the dugout of Lieutenant General V.Z. Romanovsky", nor the chief engineer of the front, General Khrenov. All the heroes of the breakthrough fit in that dugout, except for the Deputy Supreme Commander.

But on the Lenfront, Voroshilov is much and willingly remembered: he taught soldiers to quit smoking, checked the Neva ice for the patency of tanks, calmly stood under shelling, waited until the gap killed the "colonel who was standing nearby", attended the exercises and petitioned Govorov for the issuance of an additional portion of vodka to the Red Army soldiers .

A riddle can only have one solution. From this follows one of two things. Either all the Volkhov generals and the marshal are deliberately silent about the contribution of the "greatest", but disgraced under Khrushchev, commander to the lifting of the blockade, which also characterizes them in a certain way. Either Zhukov was not at the command post of Romanovsky, he made it up, which is also quite likely, given the habit of Georgy Konstantinovich to personally attribute to himself all the victories of the anti-Hitler coalition in World War II.

Around midnight on January 18, an official message was transmitted that the blockade of Leningrad had been broken. The same number G.K. Zhukov was awarded the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union, followed by the awarding of the Order of Suvorov 1st class No. 1. The Order of Suvorov was received by Army General Meretskov and Colonel General (since January 15) Govorov. The Order of Kutuzov [degree was awarded to Lieutenant General I.I. Fedyuninsky and V.Z. Romanovsky, Major General M.P. Dukhanov. Comrade Stalin has not yet thought of celebrating victories with fireworks. The 136th and 327th rifle divisions, which especially distinguished themselves in battles, were transformed into the 63rd and 64th guards, and the 61st separate tank brigade became the 30th guards.

At this point, Zhukov and Meretskov abruptly cut off their memories, although the Iskra operation was still in full swing and continued until the end of January. Well, its goals have not yet been achieved.

How, then, "to turn south and reach the line by the end of January"?... But no way. Nothing happened, so our order bearers are not interested in remembering further.

On January 19, units of the 16th fortified area and the 125th separate machine-gun artillery battalion were transferred to the troops of the 67th Army to secure the liberated area. They received the task, in case of possible attempts by the enemy to restore the blockade, to create five battalion centers of resistance, to prepare a line for defense: the northern outskirts of the 2nd Gorodok - workers' settlement No. 5. To the east, similar events were carried out by the Volkhov Front. At the same time, supply bases were moved closer to the front line, and a road network was laid.

The troops of Dukhanov and Romanovsky were to regroup within 24 hours, turn south and develop an offensive on Mustolovo - Sinyavino - the village of Mikhailovsky in order to defeat the enemy's operational reserves and reach the Moika River. In the future, it was planned to occupy the Mga station, clear the Kirov railway from the enemy and firmly occupy the Voronovo-Sigalovo-Voitolovo-Voskresensk line.

On the new front from the Neva to the "Wengler's Nose", General Lindemann brought into battle parts of nine divisions - 61, 170, 227, 96, 223, 1st Infantry, 5th Mountain Rifle, 28th Jaeger, SS Police Division and a battalion of Spaniards. True, the number of their regiments was reduced to the size of battalions, the losses in the officer corps were especially great.

The Soviet offensive resumed on 20 January 1943 at 10.30 am after 10 minutes of artillery preparation. The 67th Army, with the forces of the 46th and 123rd rifle divisions, the 102nd, 123rd, 138th and 142nd rifle divisions, the 152nd and 220th tank brigades, delivered the main blow to Mustolovo with the immediate task of capturing the Gorodok resistance node, Arbuzovo, workers' settlement No. 6.

All attacks choked under enemy fire. Only in the center did the 123rd rifle division, the 142nd and 138th brigades, overcome the northern part of the Sinyavino peat diggings and move forward 2 km. The 2nd shock army with the forces of the 147th, 239th rifle divisions and the 16th tank brigade managed to occupy the workers' settlement No. 6 on its right flank and organize a solid defense in it.

General Govorov decided to throw all the reserves of the Leningrad Front into battle and ordered the 224, 142, 90th and 189th rifle divisions, the 250th and 56th rifle brigades, the 1st Red Banner Tank Brigade to be transferred to the 67th Army. At the same time, the 45th and 63rd Guards and 268th Rifle Divisions were withdrawn for replenishment.

(Once again, about whether Leningrad could have waited until the army had prepared and completed the operation with high quality. Former company commander I.M. Dushenov claims the following:

"After the breakthrough, we were given a lot of bread: 900 g of black and 300 g of white. We refused in favor of the Leningrad children. They began to feed us well anyway: cabbage soup, buckwheat and rice porridge, American stew ...".

In fact, Dukhanov received a new army and the old task - to break through the German defenses on the Mga River and defeat the Mgin group. However, fresh

249

formations were located 30-80 km from the combat area and could enter the battle no earlier than the 25th. Therefore, in the period from January 21 to 24, the 67th Army continued its attempts to advance as part of four rifle brigades and two rifle divisions.

Finally, Dukhanov decided to bring the 11th and 55th rifle brigades into action, as well as to form an army mobile group consisting of the 220th tank and 34th ski brigades. As conceived by the commander, rifle formations were supposed to break through the enemy defenses and ensure the entry into battle of the mobile group, which was to take possession of Mustolovo with a swift blow along the road from the workers' settlement No. 6 and cut off the escape routes of the entire Gorodok group.

However, on January 25, units of the 11th and 55th brigades could not break through anything, respectively, and the strike group raid did not take place. Until the end of the month, the 224th Rifle Division and the 46th Tank Regiment were thrown into the battle consistently and without results.

Formations of the shock group of the Volkhov Front (18, 256, 379, 239, 364, 191, 147, 80, 71st rifle divisions, 33rd rifle, 11th ski, 16th tank brigades) together and separately, changing and mixing with each other until a complete loss of control, storming the Sinyavinsky Heights, the same Kruglyaya grove and also the Kvadratnaya grove near the workers' settlement No. 6, "due to heavy enemy fire, they did not advance and fought on the same lines." Rules, by the end of the month they still mastered the square rosha.

The enemy transferred the 11th and 21st infantry divisions near Sinyavino, exposing the rest of the front to the limit: from Novgorod to Pogost, under. Leningrad and Oranienbaum left Lindemann with 14 infantry divisions. But the risk paid off. Soviet troops were firmly stuck in the German defense at the turn north and east of the 2nd Gorodok, south of the workers' settlement No. 6, north of Sinyavino, west of Gontova Lipka and east of Gaitolovo. In addition, they continued to hold a foothold on the left bank of the Neva in the area of Moscow

Dubrovka.

On this operation "Spark" is considered completed.

In the course of it, no significant purely military successes were achieved. The troops of the 67th Army of the Leningrad and 2nd Shock Volkhov fronts managed to advance 6-9 km and break through a land corridor 8 to 11 km wide along the shores of Lake Ladoga. It was not possible to clear the Kirov highway from the enemy. For each kilometer recaptured from the enemy, a full-blooded division had to be paid. The 8th army of Starikov could not take a step. Soviet losses for 19 days amounted to more than 115 thousand people killed and wounded, 417 guns and mortars, 41 tanks (according to German data 225 tanks) and 41 aircraft.

But the breakthrough of the blockade had a very great political and symbolic significance. That is why the battle for the workers' settlement No. 5, in contrast to the lost battle of Luban, entered the category of strategic operations of the Red Army!

250

On January 18, as soon as Headquarters received information about the breaking of the blockade, the GKO instructed to stop the construction of a pile-ice railway line across Lake Ladoga and direct all forces and funds to the construction of a new railway from Polyany to Shlisselburg and a temporary pile bridge across the Neva near Shlisselburg. The 35 km long railway line, called the Victory Road, was laid by military builders through peat bogs in 18 days. To save time, earth embankments were not erected; ppals were laid in compacted snow. At 10 o'clock in the morning on February 7, at the platform of the Finlyandsky railway station, Leningraders solemnly welcomed the first train that came from the mainland and delivered 800 tons of butter.

Two weeks later, food supply norms established for the largest industrial centers of the country began to operate in Leningrad: workers began to receive 700-600 grams of bread a day, employees - 500, children and dependents - 400 grams. Norms of supply of other types of foodstuffs have increased.

However, the German artillery shot through the narrow corridor. It did not provide a regular supply of the city, because the path passed 4-5 km from the line

front:

"The trains had to be driven under bombardment and artillery fire. Fragments overtook the Maptinists, and the stokers, and the conductors. Repair of tracks was often done with improvised means on a live thread. With the onset of summer, the trains, contrary to all existing rules and ideas, moved along the hub in the water.

As a result of shelling and bombing, railway communication was often disrupted, and with the onset of ice drift, the bridge across the Neva ceased to function. The main cargo flows continued to go along the Road of Life through Ladoga; Until March 30, over 214,000 tons of cargo was delivered to Leningrad through it. In addition, there was a threat that the Germans would be able to restore the situation. It was not necessary for the population to know about this, but the military understood everything perfectly. And, finally, if the blockade was really broken, then why do all the authors talk about "900 days and nights"? Meretskov writes:

"The fighting of the Volkhov Front in 1943, after breaking through the Leningrad blockade, took place in conditions that were perhaps the most difficult of all that fell to the lot of its soldiers. From the end of January to the end of January of this year, our troops, maintaining in most cases the superiority on the right wing of the front, in the area of Gaitolovo, Mishkino, Voronovo, carried out a series of local operations with the tasks, firstly, to make impenetrable the southern wall of the corridor that now connected Leningrad and the Volkhov region; secondly, to expand the corridor in order to strengthen ties with Leningrad and the Baltic, making

it is more reliable to lay it, it is better to supply them and prepare for subsequent offensive actions ...

And now, for almost twelve months, two fighting neighbors, both of our fronts, were either fading or flaring up hostilities in the direction of the Mga station. At the same time, we carried out auxiliary operations on some

251

plots."

Thus, 1943 also became a year of continuous attacks for the soldiers of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts. True, the marshal, as always, is modest: the operations were not at all local and not auxiliary, but quite the contrary. Another thing is what came out of them.

252

Chapter 12. CONTINUED

OPERATIONS "ISKRA" (February - April 1943)

At the end of January, it became obvious that the efforts of the Soviet troops to break through the enemy's defensive zone only with strikes from the north were unsuccessful. Then the Headquarters came up with the idea of flank attacks and reaching the rear of the German group in the Mga-Mustolovo-Sinyavino area with the forces of five or six divisions of the 55th Army of the Leningrad Front from the Krasny Bor-Ivanovskoye area (in the direction of Mga) and with the forces of six divisions of the 54th Army Volkhovsky from the "pogostinsky bag" (in the direction of Vaskina Niva - Shapka). At the same time, the troops of other armies were to advance on Mga from the north.

In terms of goals and objectives, it was still the same Iskra; according to official history, a series of unrelated army operations; according to the memoirs of Soviet marshal generals, there was no operation at all. So, fights of local importance.

In fact, the tasks assigned to the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts were part of the strategic plan, which had the goal of defeating the entire Army Group North, liberating the Leningrad Region and creating the prerequisites for entering the Baltic.

More than 400 thousand soldiers of the North-Western Front and a specially created Special Group under the command of the "unsinkable" General M.S. Khozin (1st Tank, 68th Combined Arms Army and Reserve Group), which was assigned the main role, should take part in the planned offensive. After breaking through the German defenses south of Lake Ilmen, the Special Group was supposed to strike in a northwestern direction, go to the Porkhov-Dno-Strugi Krasnye area, cut the communications of Army Group North, liberate Pskov and

together with the 27th Army, strike at Luga.

The troops of the right wing of the Northwestern Front, after capturing Staraya Russa, were to take Novgorod in cooperation with the 52nd Army of the Volkhov Front.

Khozin's group was ordered at that time to capture the area of Kingisepp, Narva and cut off the enemy's withdrawal routes leading to Estonia. After that, it remained to "destroy the Volkhov and Leningrad groups" and collect

trophies.

The operation to encircle the Mgin-sk-Sinyavino group began on February 10. From Kolpino in the direction of Tosno, after a two-hour artillery preparation, with the support of the 1st Red Banner Tank Brigade, the 31st and 46th Tank Regiments, the 72.43rd Rifle and 63rd Guards Divisions of the 55th Army of Leningrad attacked

front.

253

They were met by units of the 250th Spanish "Blue" division (by the color of their uniforms, and not by virtue of sexual inclinations) of General Esteban-Infantes. According to Karel, the Spaniards on the 30-kilometer stretch had: the 260th Infantry Regiment (2500 people), as well as three battalions (total strength up to 2000 people), several special forces units, 24 guns and not a single tank; the Russians have 33,000 men, 60 tanks, up to 1,000 guns.

In three days of fighting, Soviet troops managed to break through the enemy defenses, advance 4 km along the Moscow railway and capture the settlements of Krasny Bor, Staraya Myza, Chernyshevo and the Popovka station. At the point of impact was the guards of General Simonyak. As I.M. Dushevsky:

"Comdivid N.P. Simonyak said: "Brothers, we will defeat the Spaniards! Whoever stays alive will all be Heroes of the Soviet Union." We flew at them like kites, and three hours later Krasny Bor was ours. For my company, this operation turned out to be the most successful ... They wanted to reward us, but they canceled it. As the commander of the 55th Army, V. Sviridov, said, the capture of Krasny Bor was an operation of local significance. Only a few received soldier's medals.

Parts of the 14th fortified region were entrenched in the captured positions. A mobile group was immediately introduced into the breakthrough under the leadership of the deputy army commander, Major General I.M. Lyubovtseva. The group had the task of capturing Ulyanovsk with a strike along the line of the October railway. However, the 222nd tank and 34th ski brigades, which were part of the group, failed to build on success. Cause:

"Due to the sudden thaw, the tankers could not operate off the roads, and

skiers have become ordinary foot soldiers.

The weather, of course, was not good for the enemy. In addition, even according to the "Aryans of the Nordic race", usually with arrogance towards their allies, the Spaniards fought heroically:

"The Spaniards [her] 71 <) fought with daggers, shovels and hand grenades. Their exceptional valor deserves the memory of posterity."

The "Blue" division lost more than half of its strength (about 3200 people) killed and wounded, but held out until the 212th Infantry Division of General Reiman, hastily transferred from the Chudovo region, approached. The Germans counterattacked and pushed the Soviet units back. Borshev's 268th Rifle Division, brought into the battle, was unable to turn the tide. On the left flank of the army, the 43rd Infantry Division of Colonel Ya.T. Sinkevich and the 34th ski brigade of Lieutenant Colonel Ya.F. Potekhin, having pressed the enemy by 3-4 km, reached the river bank.

The result of two weeks of fighting was the liberation of Krasny Bor by the troops of the Lenfront, but the breakthrough to Tosno failed. The Germans estimated Soviet losses at 11,000 killed.

General Sviridov shifted his efforts to his left flank and on February 23 made an attempt to develop an offensive from the Ivanovo bridgehead. according to plan

254

a blow from the "piglet" towards Ulyanovka, Tosno was delivered by the 43rd Infantry Division. At the same time, the 56th separate brigade formed from the sailors of Kronstadt, numbering 4800 people under the command of M.D. Papchenko. The sailors broke into the German trenches, captured the mast impregnation plant and the church.

The already familiar enemy, reorganized into the 4th SS Panzergrenadier Police Division, plus parts of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade, put up strong resistance. The fierce battle, which lasted one day, ended in the death of the landing force. Under deadly fire, the 43rd Rifle Division did not rise to the attack.

Until January 1944, the positions of the parties here did not change.

The 54th Army advancing from Smerdyn (115th, 177th, 198th, 281st, 294th, 311th Rifle Divisions, 140th Rifle, 124th Tank Brigade, 6th Marine Brigade), attacking the 217th Infantry Division at the front 5 km, began to push the Germans. But suddenly she ran into the 96th Infantry Division, transferred here from the Sinyavino direction for rest and replenishment. Together with units of the 61st and 132nd Infantry Divisions, the regiments of General Nöldechen took part in

repelling a Soviet attack. The advance of Sukhomlin's army in February amounted to

3-4km.

In his habit of turning his own defeats into victories, Meretskov assures us that the 54th Army "has accomplished its task." It turns out that she "managed to divert the fascist troops intended for a breakthrough to Shlisselburg." During the "distraction", the front commander himself, in company with K.E. Voroshilov, who, as usual, dragged everyone to the front line, almost got captured by the Germans.

I must say that the commander of the German Army Group "North" Linedmann at that moment least of all thought about a breakthrough to Shlisselburg, since on February 15, south of Lake Ilmen, six combined arms and one tank army of the Northwestern Front under the command of Marshal S.K. Tymoshenko launched an operation to defeat

Fighting February 6 - December 1943

16th German Army and exit to the rear of the 18th Army. The result of this offensive was the organized evacuation of the Demyansky bag by the enemy, which he held for 17 months, and the establishment of a front line along the Lovat River.

But that's all. The general strategic offensive in the northwestern direction failed. The special group of troops of General Khozin was disbanded. It's funny how Meretskov, who considers his task "accomplished", evaluates the actions of Marshal Timoshenko:

255

"I draw this conclusion: although by that time the Red Army had already achieved major successes, our military leaders still had much to learn in the complex art of commanding modern war."

On the northern face of the Sinyavino salient of the 67th army of Dukhanov, which went on the offensive on February 12, in five days of fierce fighting, they managed to take the ruins of the 1st and 2nd Gorodoks and the 8th hydroelectric power station and advance 5 km to the Utah in the Arbuzov area. Under threat of encirclement, the Germans left their positions on February 17 in front of the Nevsky "piglet". This legendary and meaningless epic has ended.

In the hope of breaking through the blockade, Soviet troops held the Nevsky bridgehead for about 400 days. It was plowed up by explosions of shells and mines. After the war, it was calculated that up to 12 kg of metal fell on every square meter. At each meter of the "piglet" 17 people died. And only about 250 thousand Soviet soldiers. This number was enough to complete at least 22 divisions, or 3-4 combined arms armies. The bridgehead became a huge mass grave, without playing any operational role.

In the east, in the zone of the 4th Army of the Volkhov Front, an attempt was again made to throw the Germans from the Kirishek bridgehead. Having washed up with a grove High,

military engineers remembered the experience of the Crimean War and decided to dig under it. The mine gallery was carried out by two teams of sappers of the 44th division, observing the strictest secrecy measures, from the end of November 1942. After driving 180 meters underground, an explosion chamber was set up at the end of the gallery, more than 30 tons of explosives were laid, and explosive nets were mounted. And at 7 o'clock in the morning on February 23, 1943, the High Grove and the German stronghold located in it took off into the air. The Soviet assault battalion, with one throw, without meeting resistance, took up a new position, but that was all. Further advance was stopped by enemy counterattacks.

On February 27, People's Commissar of Defense Stalin pointed out to Zhukov and Voroshilov:

"The main reason for the failure was that the 67th and 2nd shock armies acted separately and each in its own sector was obliged to break through the enemy's fire system, which led to the dispersal of forces and means, to aimless large casualties in manpower and equipment."

Marshal Zhukov, whose task was precisely to coordinate the actions of the Volkhovites and Leningraders, did not remember anything about his participation in the February breakthrough. His "reflections" for this period of the past are devoted to the ups and downs of the Battle of Stalingrad, in which Georgy Konstantinovich did not take part, and smoothly flow to the Kursk Bulge.

The Directive of the Headquarters ordered the offensive to be temporarily stopped, the 2nd shock army, in order to centralize control, be transferred to the Leningrad Front, the elimination of the Sinyavin "sore" was entrusted to General Govorov, and the representation to Marshal Voroshilov. True, exactly one week later, Stalin changed his mind and ordered the return of Romanovsky's army back. In early March, the fighting subsided briefly.

256

But a new offensive operation was immediately conceived to defeat the Mginsk-Sinyavin grouping of the 18th Army by delivering deeper flank attacks. The Volkhov Front was given the task of breaking through the enemy defenses in the Voronovo-Lodva sector and, developing a strike south of Mga, to link up with the troops of the Leningrad Front in the Vaitolovo area.

Govorov's troops were obliged to break through the German positions at Krasny Bor, capture Ulyanovsk and Sablino, followed by an advance to Vaitolovo and, in cooperation with Meretskov's troops, "destroy or capture" the enemy grouping. On the Sinyavinsky Front, the 2nd shock and 67th armies were ordered to temporarily go on the defensive.

The start of the operation was scheduled for March 14, 1943, and they planned to complete it no later than March 25. The organization of interaction between the fronts and the coordination of their actions were entrusted to Marshal Voroshilov.

To accomplish the assigned task, the commander of the Volkhov Front allocated the 8th Army, consisting of ten rifle divisions, two rifle and two

tank brigades, all reinforcement artillery, which the front had. In his reserve, Meretskov left one rifle division and two rifle brigades.

Commander-8 built the troops of the shock group in two echelons. The first included five rifle divisions (286, 256, 378, 374th and 265th), four tank regiments (35th, 25th, 33rd, 50th) and all reinforcement artillery. In the second - three rifle divisions (239th, 364th and 64th guards) and two tank brigades (122nd and 185th). To the north of the planned breakthrough site, from Voronovo to Gaitolovo, the 372nd Rifle Division and the 58th Rifle Brigade occupied positions.

In front of the army of General Starikov, the regiments of the 223rd infantry and 285th security German divisions defended themselves in the breakthrough sector.

From Krasny Bor, the 55th Army was to attack the enemy, which had 9 divisions in two operational echelons (72, 291, 123, 131, 46, 189, 224, 13, 268 rifle) and 6 brigades (56, 250- I'm Rifle, 222, 152, 220, 30th Guards Tank) and another 31st Breakthrough Tank Regiment!

Difficulties in organizing the delivery of troops, ammunition and materiel in the conditions of the beginning of spring forced them to postpone the start of the offensive to March 19.

The offensive of the 8th Army began with artillery preparation lasting 2 hours and 15 minutes. In three days, the troops managed to break through the front line of the enemy's defenses on a front of 7 km and move forward from 3 to 4 km. A mobile detachment consisting of the 191st Guards Rifle Regiment of the 64th Guards Division and a tank battalion of the 122nd Tank Brigade under the command of Major Rudko broke through to the Mga-Kirishi railway, but was cut off. The Nemps, having transferred the 11th, 21st and 121st Infantry Divisions to the breakthrough site, continuously counterattacked, the fighting took on a protracted character. Voroshilov reported to the Kremlin:

257

"For March 21, despite the introduction of two fresh divisions FOR the development of a breakthrough, units of the 8th Army did not advance on the day of the battle. The reasons are the fire resistance of the enemy, and most importantly, the poor organization of command and control. On March 20, two divisions of the second echelon were introduced through the battle formations of the troops of the first echelon. The entry of these divisions was not actually organized and, due to the lack of a clear leadership, the troops in the forest mixed up with each other, control was lost.

The true position of the army command was established only by the evening of March 21, having previously received reports from the divisions on the progress indicating points that were not actually engaged. The rest of the day of March 21 and the night of March 22 were spent on putting the confused troops in order.

On April 1, Meretskov brought the 14th Rifle Division and the 1st Separate Rifle Brigade into the battle from the reserve, which, together with the 64th Guards Division, were to capture the enemy's Karbusel node of resistance, creating the

the very conditions for the development of the offensive of the entire shock group of the army. However, the increased resistance of the enemy, who had transferred the 69th, 121st, 21st Infantry and 5th Mountain Rifle Divisions, could not be overcome. A day later, the offensive of the 8th Army finally bogged down.

The army of Leningraders, advancing on the signal "Hurricane" 3-4 km towards Ulyanovsk, was stopped by the 4th SS division, the legion "Netherlands", a company of "tigers" and a battalion of the 5th mountain rifle division transferred on trucks directly to the battlefield. Then units of the 58th, 170th and 254th Infantry Divisions approached. Of the 500 "Flemings" who accepted the battle, 45 survived, but Sablino and Ulyanovka turned out to be unattainable. [1]. Karel says:

"Losses on the Russian side were even more horrendous. In the second battle, rivers of blood were shed on Lake Ladoga. The peat bog near Sinyavino, the forests near Kolpino and Krasny Bor were one terrible battlefield.

On March 30, General Govorov reported that he had achieved significant results: firstly, he thwarted the German attack that was being prepared in the Kolpino direction (?), secondly, he was once again convinced of "the exceptional importance of the Ulyanovsk knot in the enemy's defense system" (!), And asked permission to stop the attacks due to the rapidly ending shells and soldiers. Say, six divisions of the 55th Army need "to be completed and put in order."

Voroshilov, in his report to the Supreme on April 1, stated in plain text: of the nine divisions allocated by the Leningrad Front, three remained. In his opinion, it was necessary to curtail the operation and give the troops at least a month to put themselves in order, accumulate ammunition and train reinforcements in elementary offensive operations:

"It is necessary to teach at least individual battalions how to act in the forest."

Stalin agreed. On April 4, the armies received an order to gain a foothold on the achieved lines and prepare a heavily echeloned defense. "Historians

258

in uniform" claim that this "allowed the 8th Army to successfully repel the repeated attacks of superior enemy forces (?!), which followed from April 11, including the 5th mountain rifle and 69th infantry divisions." By the way, General Starikov had "only" 14 divisions (11 rifle, 1 artillery, 2 anti-aircraft), 5 brigades (3 rifle, 2 tank) and 20 separate regiments (4 tank,

15
artillery and mortars).

Modern statistical studies by Russian historians indicate Soviet losses only for Operation Iskra, which they consider completed on January 30, 1943. At the same time, they do not take into account the "army operations" of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts. From the Voroshilov locall, you can only learn the following:

"The losses in people on both fronts are very high, the consumption of ammunition, in comparison with the successes achieved, is large, the losses in tanks are significant," and all this is the result not only and, in my opinion, not even so much because the enemy is strong, but a consequence that we were not well prepared for this operation."

German military historians quite reasonably believe that in the period from January 12 to April 4, 1943, three phases of the Second Battle of Ladoga unfolded around Mga, during which the losses of two Soviet fronts amounted to 270 thousand people, 847 tanks and 693 aircraft. If we estimate the consumption of fighters in Iskra - 6,000 people a day, then it goes something like this.

In April, there was a temporary lull. "Cunning Yaros-lavets" (Meretskov) immediately began to draw up a new plan to defeat the enemy's Mginsko-Sinyavinskaya grouping. Assuring Stalin that the enemy was "systematically preparing for the assault on Leningrad", and only the active actions of the Volkhov Front "thwarted" this assault, he asked for more tanks, more shells and reinforcements, reinforcements, reinforcements. The general received reinforcements, but instead of tanks, he was ordered to improve the defense. By a directive of April 16, the 2nd Shock Army was withdrawn from the Volkhov Front and transferred to the Leningrad Front. In early May, the 52nd Army went to the Stavka reserve.

Instead of Voroshilov, Marshal S.K. was appointed representative of the Headquarters. Timoshenko. For the failure of the strategic breakthrough into the Baltic states, which cost the loss of more than 100 thousand soldiers and commanders of the North-Western Front, the "red martal" was transferred to the "coordinators" until the end of the war.

Both opposing sides waited out the mudslide, improved the defense, and Meretskov "thought more and more" over the plans for the summer campaign. And as soon as the commander began to think, and in this matter the main thing is to start, God knows what original, but quite sensible thoughts wandered in his head:

"What is needed in order to preempt the enemy ular on our troops near Ladoga? Deliver a counterattack in time (He had not yet thought of deliberate defense, this was beyond the scope of our doctrine - V.B.). What needs to be done to prepare

259

our attack? Weaken enemy defenses. And how to divert his attention from the left flank of the front, if the operation will have to be carried out there? Of course, draw attention to the right flank. And how do the Volkhovites pull back Nazi divisions from other fronts? Only by destroying their connections on our front. Finally, how to achieve all this while maintaining our own troops? Switch to the massive use of our artillery and aircraft.

So, by the method of logical analysis, after fighting for two years, Army General Meretskov thought of the massive and systematic use of fire weapons in order to wear down the enemy in the course of a positional struggle. The idea took shape in the plan "Long artillery and aviation offensive in the conditions

own and enemy stable defense. Or more simply - "mill".

Political worker Kalashnikov assures that the Volkhov Front, continuously inflicting considerable damage to the enemy, had no losses itself, "since the artillery operated mainly from closed positions." However, this statement does not fit with the task that the political departments of the formations persistently solved under his leadership:

"The indefatigable education in people of an offensive impulse."

This means that the Soviet command still tirelessly implemented the principle of active defense, only now there was much more artillery, and it was possible not to save on shells and bombs. According to Meretskov, in some sectors of the front, massive fire training was carried out according to the full scheme with the transfer of fire, simulating the start of an offensive, in others, fighters were sent to attack without any fire training so that the "combat tone" did not decrease. Although he believes that his casualties were "insignificant", the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts lost up to 2,000 people per day in killed and wounded on average. But in general, "these are normal combat everyday life of the front, which has learned to organize defense."

"Mill" worked from mid-May to early July. How many Germans were "ground" in this way is unknown, according to Meretskov, "thousands of soldiers and officers." How many shells were used up is not reported, but it is clear that there are many. But it is absolutely certain that the Wehrmacht generals were not so stupid as to unravel Meretskov's trick only after a month and a half:

"By the beginning of July, having suffered quite heavy losses, the fascists finally realized their plan and learned quite skillfully to withdraw their troops from under fire raids. A
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in response, they stopped the operation, believing that it had already played its role.

I think it was the other way around. The Germans had mastered the art of "withdrawing their troops" from the first day of the war and used this technique quite often. Most likely, in early July, the Soviet command guessed this and stopped throwing ammunition into the wind.

In parallel, a new offensive operation on two fronts was being prepared.

260

Baltic Fleet 6 1943

The German naval command, taking into account the lessons of 1942, took measures to prepare for the further strengthening of anti-submarine lines, setting the goal of "hermetically" clogging the Finnish

bay.

In April, the enemy deployed double anti-submarine nets up to 60 meters deep and about 30 miles along the front between Nargen Island and the Hanko Peninsula. The network fence was supplemented by mine banks. Already existing minefields were significantly compacted. In order to ensure the stability of anti-submarine nets in bad weather, they were not deepened to the very bottom, and the formed bottom slot was covered with 200 bottom mines, which excluded the passage of submarines under the net.

The work was completed by May 9th. In total, the Germans and Finns placed 9834 mines and 1244 mine defenders. At the same time, they made several active minelayings on the Seskar reach, near Lavensari Island and on the approaches to Kronstadt.

The strengthening of the anti-submarine line in the Gulf of Finland in the spring of 1943 practically excluded the use of submarines of the Baltic Fleet on sea lanes. The Soviet command had reliable information about this. Staff exercises showed that not a single boat could overcome such a barrage, but, as usual, the submariners were given the same tasks.

The first on the passage to Kronstadt right in the Sea Canal on a non-contact mine was blown up and sank by the boat Shch-323 of the captain of the 2nd rank A.G. Andronov.

On May 7–9, a group of boats consisting of the guards Sh-303, the Red Banner Shch-406 and Shch-408 departed from Lavensari. Only one returned - Shch-303. Having crossed the Gogland minefields, its commander, Captain 3rd Rank I.V. Travkin tried to overcome the Hanko-Nargen position. The boat fell into anti-submarine nets three times and, having received permission, miraculously returned to Kronstadt. Two other "pikes" - captain 3rd rank E.Ya. Osipov (Sch-406) and Lieutenant Commander P.S. Kuzmina (Sh-408) - were discovered by the enemy and destroyed by air strikes and surface ships.

Further attempts to force the Gulf of Finland with such a dense anti-submarine line did not make sense. To ensure the exit of submarines into the Baltic Sea, it was necessary either to destroy the anti-submarine line, or to create a bypass route, which was possible only as a result of mastering the southern or northern coast of the Gulf of Finland.

The boats went on a campaign one after another and did not return. The naval commander Tributs, not inferior in firmness to the land commanders, sent new crews to break through. In August, in order to reconnoiter the situation west of Gogland, S-9 submarines under the command of Captain 3rd Rank A.I. Mylnikov and S-12 captain 3rd rank A.A. Baschenko. Both were killed by mines. True, the boats M-90, M-96 and M-102, which went out to reconnoiter the Gogland reach and Narva Bay,

261

returned safely to base.

They say that several senior officers of the Baltic Fleet made a petition to Moscow, which, with an opportunity, was secretly handed over to the head of the Main

naval headquarters to Admiral I.S. Isakov. He reported to Stalin. Only after a call from the Supreme Commander of the Fleet, who earned the nickname "Killer" among the submariners, stopped destroying his submarine forces.

Until October 1944, the submarines of the Baltic Fleet, tightly blocked in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, no longer went to sea.

262

Chapter 13

At the end of May 1943, Govorov and Meretskov were summoned to the Kremlin and received an order to conduct the Mginsky operation. Its idea was to inflict counter blows by the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts on the flanks of the Mginsko-Sinyavinskaya enemy grouping with the aim of encircling and destroying.

General Meretskov outlined the main blow with the forces of the 8th army of Starikov, from east to west, in the direction of Voronovo - the village of Mikhailovsky, Mga. To ensure the left flank of the strike force, an auxiliary attack was being prepared on Karbusel - Turyshkino.

The plan of General Govorov envisaged the capture by the forces of the 67th army of Dukhanov of the Sinyavinsky and Kelkolovsky heights, the complete clearance of the enemy from the eastern bank of the Neva in the Arbuzovo-Ivanovskoye sector and the establishment of a common front with the 55th army and the troops of the Volkhov Front along the line of the Kirov railway.

To meet in Mga, the soldiers of the Leningrad Front had to overcome about 9 km, the Volkhov Front - 14 km, storming enemy fortifications, about which General Khrenov, who was proud of his success in building the "Volkhov notch", wrote:

"Hitler's defense, frankly, was in no way inferior to ours and had enough

great depth."

In general, a frontal assault on the same German positions and strongholds, which had once been Russian villages, was being prepared again, from the same directions, as before - on Mga. The whole difference is new "soldiers", new "thirty-fours" and an order of magnitude larger, in qualitative and especially quantitative terms, artillery, aviation and engineering support. We can completely agree with Polman's assessment:

"No new ideas and goals, no breadth of intent and surprise, but just a continuation of the second battle of Ladoga, which the German command could not prevent by any countermeasures, because it did not have the necessary means for this."

And no "breadth" was required from the "Red Hindenburgs". According to Meretskov, the Supreme Commander at the end of the conversation emphasized:

"The main thing for you is not the seizure of territory, but the destruction of German divisions."

The main events of the summer campaign were expected in the area of the Kursk Bulge, and Stalin pushed the affairs of Leningrad into the background. Not counting too much on the fact that without a five-fold superiority in forces over Kühler's troops, it would be possible to recapture MSU from the Germans, the Supreme Commander had in mind the standard tasks of auxiliary sectors: to tie down, "bleed", not allow the enemy to transfer

263

forces to the central sector of the Soviet-German front.

Elementary military arithmetic has long calculated that such a "destruction" of one German division will cost at least three of its own, but the high command of the Red Army was satisfied with such a ratio of losses. The extensive method of warfare was fully developed, the death machine was debugged and worked smoothly. Former soldier N.N. Nikulin writes:

"In the infantry divisions, already in 1941-42, a backbone of supplies, doctors, counterintelligence officers, staff officers and tee was formed. People who formed a mechanism for accepting replacements and sending them into battle, to their death. A kind of death mill. This backbone is

At its core, it was preserved, getting used to its terrible functions, and the appropriate people were selected, those who could cope with such a thing. The authorities also crept up without reasoning, either stupid or scum, capable only of

cruelty.

"Forward!" — and that's it.

My commander of an infantry regiment in the "native" 311th division, moved to his position from the commander of the bath and laundry detachment. He turned out to be very capable of driving his regiment forward without reasoning. I ruined him many times, and in between I drank vodka and danced a gypsy girl.

The commander of the German regiment that opposed us near Voronovo, commanded a battalion back in 1914-1918, was a professional, knew all the intricacies of military affairs and, of course, knew how to take care of his people and kill our advancing hordes ... Great Stalin, not burdened with a conscience, neither morality nor religious motives, created an equally great party that corrupted the whole country and suppressed dissent. Hence our relationship with people.

Once I accidentally overheard a conversation between the commissar and the commander of a rifle battalion who was in battle. This conversation expressed the essence of what was happening: "We'll fight for another two days, we'll finish off the rest, and we'll go to the rear for reorganization. Let's take a walk!" Soldiers have always been manure. Especially in our great power, and especially under socialism.

I remember how General Simonyak was told: "General, you can't attack this height, we will only lose a lot of people and not succeed." Always drunk Simonyak (on the Leningrad front he was entrusted with the guards rifle corps) answered: "Just think, people. People are dust, go ahead!..."

The owner from Moscow, pointing his finger at the map, orders to advance. The generals drive the regiments and divisions, and the commanders on the spot do not have the right to take the initiative. Order "Forward!" and the unrequited soldiers went to die. We went to the machine guns. Flanking? Not ordered, do what you are told. Yes, and forgot how to think and reason. They are more concerned with keeping their place and pleasing their superiors. Losses don't matter. They killed some, they will bring others. There are many people. And these people are seized in the rear, in the fields, in factories, dressed in greatcoats, given a rifle and - "Forward!". And confused, frightened, demoralized, they are dying like flies...

Surprisingly different psychology of a person going to storm and one who

264

watching the attack from the side, when he himself does not need to die. Then everything seems simple: forward and only forward!"

Theoretically, it was assumed that the offensive of the Soviet troops would force the German command to pull large forces into the area of the Mgin'sky ledge, substituting them under the concentrated fire strikes of powerful artillery and aviation groups. According to the Soviet command, the Mga station was supposed to become "a magnet that attracts enemy troops to itself." However, this idea with its "depth" is more reminiscent of a well-known anecdote when a rooster runs after a chicken and calms itself: "I won't catch up, I'll keep warm."

In addition, the commander of the Volkhov Front, who suspected the perfidious Germans of preparing an offensive with the aim of reaching Lake Ladoga and restoring the blockade of Leningrad, as usual, was going to "break" this assault. Meretskov, out of nowhere, counted 68 divisions and 6 brigades in Army Group North:

"And in the open, Kuchler, taking into account his reserves and troops stationed on the temporarily occupied Soviet territory in the rear zone of his army group, could count on dozens of divisions."

Let's clarify: "in general" Kuchler could count on 46 divisions and one brigade at his disposal at the beginning of July. As part of the 18th Lindemann Army, mainly due to the weakening of the neighboring 16th Army, there were 28 infantry, airfield, mountain rifle divisions and the Latvian SS brigade. The reserve of the commander of Army Group North included the 18th motorized, 388th training and 223rd infantry divisions. Three security divisions ensured the "new order" in the rear zone.

As part of the Volkhov Front, which was opposed by 15 enemy infantry divisions, on July 1 there were 28 rifle and 1 artillery divisions, 6 rifle and 6 tank brigades, 5 separate tank regiments and 6 separate tank battalions, as well as 2 fortified areas.

In the area of the beating of German troops planned by the Soviet Headquarters - in the "bottleneck" - seven divisions of the 26th Army Corps dug into the ground: in the east, near Karbusel, Voronovo and Gaitolovo - the 212th and 69th infantry divisions, along the Kirov railway 1st Infantry and 5th Mountain Rifle. In the north, on both sides of the "Vengler's Nose" stood the 290th, on the Sinyavinsky heights - the 11th division and on the Moika River - the 23rd infantry division. Lindemann kept the 121st Infantry and 28th Jaeger Divisions in reserve. Soviet intelligence estimated the enemy forces at about 100 thousand people, 140-160 tanks and assault guns.

The Soviet command gathered in the 67th and 8th armies more than 250,000 soldiers and officers, 550 tanks and self-propelled guns.

The 8th Army, having received additional formations from the reserve of the Volkhov Front, had 11 rifle divisions and 2 rifle brigades. The troops of the shock group were built in two echelons: in the first - four rifle divisions (184, 378, 256, 364th), each of them was reinforced by a tank

265

regiment; in the second - also four rifle divisions (379, 239, 165th and 374th) and two tank brigades (16th and 122nd). The reserve consisted of the 286th Rifle Division and the 58th Rifle Brigade. The breakthrough was planned on a section with a length of 13.5 km.

The head of the army engineering troops, Colonel Germanovich, had at his disposal 11 divisional engineer battalions, three engineering brigades and two separate front-line engineer battalions.

In the 67th Army, which broke through in the Arbuzovo-Sinyavino sector, there were 8 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions, a guards tank brigade, three detachments
ny tank regiments.

The aviators of the 13th and 14th air armies, as well as long-range aviation formations - about 1000 aircraft (the Germans had 140 aircraft) were to provide support and cover for the ground troops. Only Meretskov was allowed to spend 850 thousand shells and mines on the operation - more than a thousand wagons. The offensive of the Leningrad Front was preceded by a ten-day, Volkhov - five-day processing of German positions, to which about 2900 guns were involved only in the sector of the 67th Army.

In the summer of 1943, a fashion arose in the Soviet General Staff to assign the names of Russian commanders to major offensive operations. Thus, the troops of the Bryansk and Central Fronts carried out Operation Kutuzov, which ended with the liberation of Orel, the final stage of the Battle of Kursk was called Rumyantsev, the Smolensk Operation of the Kalinin and Western Fronts was called Suvorov. The offensive of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts received in honor of the author of the famous breakthrough

the name "Brusilov".

From July 12, the artillery of the Leningrad Front, according to the plan of the "preparatory period", began the systematic destruction of the structures of enemy strongholds and resistance centers, the destruction of firing points, the suppression of the "most harmful" batteries, and the "exhaustion" of enemy manpower. On July 17, the artillery of the Volkhov Front came into action.

Finally, on July 22 at 6.35 am, after a powerful one and a half hour artillery and aviation preparation, two Soviet armies moved to storm. The fire was so strong that it frightened its own infantry no less than the German. The former head of the operations department of the headquarters of the artillery of the Volkhov Front, Colonel D. Morozov, recalls:

"An hour after the start of the artillery preparation, a thick veil of smoke and dust shrouded the area. When the artillery fire was removed from the first trench of the enemy and moved to a depth of three hundred or four hundred meters, it seemed to even experienced officers that the barrage of fire remained in its original place. As for the young infantrymen, they were completely confused and were afraid to raise their heads from the trench. We, the gunners, this time, as they say, overdid it. Twenty minutes passed, and the infantry did not rise

266

The division commander, Major General Fetisov, and the artillery commander, Keremenetsky, were nervous. And how do you keep calm in such an environment. And the infantry, stunned by the thunder of the cannonade, could not understand in any way that the artillery fire had long been removed from the objects of attack. We had to move the artillery fire even deeper and sharply weaken its density.

The tanks arrived. Together with them, the infantry finally moved forward. The first enemy position was broken through in many places ... The second position, two to three and a half kilometers away from the first, was not captured on the move. The infantry delayed too long with the start of the attack, the moment was lost.

Again, as in all previous operations, the slow bloody "gnawing" of the German fortifications began.

Three divisions of General Simonyak's 30th Guards Corps attacked in the first echelon on the Arbuzovo-Sinyavino station section. Partially breaking the front line, they wedged into the German defenses, but were met with heavy fire and violent counterattacks, and then completely thrown back to their original positions. The results of the 55th Army, which tried to assist, were even more miserable.

In the zone of the 8th Army, events developed similarly, the formations of the first echelon failed to advance beyond the first trench. At the end of the month, the 379th and 165th rifle divisions were introduced into the battle, replacing the 18th and 256th. But even after that, the situation did not change, the Soviet troops stomped on the spot, of course, "grinding" the enemy forces along the way. All new ones stepped into the fray

connections. The fighting flared up fierce, no prisoners were taken.

General Lindemann almost immediately used his reserve - the 121st Infantry Division in the eastern sector, the 28th Jaeger Division - west of the Sinyavinsky Heights. Taking advantage of the inconsistency in the actions of the two Soviet groups, the commander of the 18th Army managed to maneuver forces, replace battered regiments and hold positions in both directions of breakthroughs.

On July 24, he removed the 58th Infantry Division of General von Graffen from near Leningrad and threw it into a counterattack between the Neva and the workers' settlement No. western coast. The 254th Infantry Division was transferred from Krasny Bor. From the 16th Army, von Küchler transferred the 126th Infantry Division, which replaced the 28th Chasseurs.

On July 29, the ADC joined the operation. 333 aircraft participated in her first raid, from 100 to 150 in subsequent ones. Meretskov complains that Colonel General A. E. Golovanov was greedy and allocated "not so many combat vehicles" to the front. But gasoline and bombs were spent unlimitedly. For fifteen days, long-range bombers bombarded enemy lines of communication from Mga and Ul'yanovka to Luga, Narva and Pskov.

On the night of August 11, the Soviet side activated seven more divisions. So, General Starikov brought into battle the 256th, 165th and 378th rifle. By the end of the next

267

day they occupied the Porechye stronghold. On August 12, Golovanov's long-range bombers were redirected to the central sector of the Soviet-German front. Suddenly, "the resistance of the Nazis increased." Meretskov, according to his own statement, was pleased:

"It turned out that the Nazi command completely removed two infantry divisions from near Leningrad, intended to storm the city (in September 1941, von Leeb did not have enough divisions to storm the city, including three tank divisions), and plugged the hole with them to localize the breakthrough, without letting it turn into a wide gap. Volkhovites rejoiced at this and were proud: it was no joke, because the plan of the Nazis to break through again from the south to Lake Ladoga was frustrated and the instructions of the Headquarters on the maximum destruction of the Nazi troops were carried out!

How many of his own troops died, Marshal Meretskov never remembered anywhere. Meanwhile, the war, depending on where the eyewitness was, looks different. One can rejoice at the fulfillment of the instructions of the Headquarters, sitting in Malaya Vishera, a hundred kilometers from the front line, one can scold the infantry from the division's NP that does not go on the attack, or one can look from the point of view of an "active bayonet", whose life was measured in one week, a soldier "creeping on the belly through front-line mud.

Around this time, the 311th Kirov Division left the Pogostye area to the Apraksin station on a night march and immediately entered the battle. Her fighters are

they noticed neither the "joyful faces" of the Volkhovites, nor their own artillery, which was so "overdone" that by August 17 they had exhausted the entire supply of shells fired for the operation. The division melted away in three days. The diary of a sergeant of the 1067th Infantry Regiment is strikingly different from the memoirs of a proud marshal:

"August 15. We approach the overpass. The division stretched out along the trenches. As always, confusion. Then we run, then we wait for something. Relatively quiet... took cover in a funnel... At the bottom of the funnel is a helmet. He kicked it with his foot - hard: it had half a skull in it, probably from last year. Go ahead. The trenches converge under the railway bridge, from where there is only one way - into hell. The wounded, bloody and dirty, with their yellow-gray faces, parched lips and feverishly shining eyes, crawl towards them. Groaning, groaning, swearing...

How much longer do we have to live? They say that we will go into battle on the move, the previous division was enough for two hours. "It beats! ... It beats, bitch!" - the wounded answer questions ... The earth is bumpy - a funnel to a funnel. It's hard... Hearing is tense and painfully catches every rustle. Here... It's flying! We roll head over heels into the trench, deeper, lower, into the pit, with our hands into something sticky ... The roar of a gap, the earth is falling. It's gone. We get up. Pit - toilet.

August 16th. At night they dug into the ground not far from the Germans. We sit in holes. You can't get out and get up - it will kill you. It seems that the wind is made of fragments. In order to occupy time with something, to forget ourselves, we play an imaginary game right there: two people put machine guns out of the pit with their butt up, whose one is more likely to break, he won ... The gun was broken. The trunk is hooked.

At noon we go with a package to the rear. Three. First, crawling like snakes to trantea, and

268

then run further. Legs barely move, breath wheezing and whistling. You can't stop. Those who tried to rest are now lying on both sides of the trench, and blood flows down the clay walls in thin black streams, accumulating at the bottom in sticky puddles The shelling begins. The Germans, obviously, have noticed us and are hitting us with surprising accuracy

18 August. Haven't slept since the 14th. We sit in the same holes. The new cannon was buried deeper than the old one, and so far it is intact. A day ago, our projectile flew in from the rear and exploded five steps from us. It's good that they were in the pit ... The shell turned the dead man out of the ground, still fresh. Today he is basking in the sun and smells. There are whole layers in the earth here. At a depth of one and a half to two meters, you can find cartridges, weapons, clothes, old felt boots. Everything is swept up...

Ahead, in the neutral zone, about forty tanks. Some are red, burnt. Others are still intact, but motionless - the Germans shoot them from heavy mortars. Flight - short flight, flight again. Fuck! A multi-ton tank shatters into pieces. What a tanker! After all, he has no right to leave a half-damaged car ... One tank is standing close to us, a fracture to our trenches. He was returning from the attack when he was hit. Human entrails are wound around its tower - the remnants of the landing force that rode on it to attack. The shells intended by the Germans for this tank are flying at us. We're sinking deeper into the ground...

From our division for a long time there was only one number, cooks, foremen, yes we, near the gun. Soon it's our turn. Porridge again with fragments: when the food carrier crawls, the thermos on his back breaks through ... The tunic and pants have become like thick cardboard: they are crusted with blood and dirt. On his knees and elbows - holes up to his naked body - he crawled. He threw the helmet, few people wear them here, but there are a lot of them lying around. This item of a soldier's toilet is used for other purposes. We usually shit on the helmet, then we throw it over the parapet of the trench, and the blast wave throws everything back, on our heads ...

The dead man stinks unbearably. There are many around here, old and new. Some were dried to blackness, heads like mummies, with gleaming teeth. Others were swollen, as if ready to burst. Some inexperienced soldiers dug their shelters in the sandy walls of the trench and the earth, having collapsed from a nearby explosion, crushed them. So they lie, curled up, as if sleeping under a thick layer of sand. A picture resembling a grave in a section. In the trench, here and there, parts of bodies trampled into the clay stick out; where is the back, where is the flattened face, where is the hand, brown, the color of the earth. We walk right through them.

August 20th. For about a week I didn't close my eyes, and I don't want to. The last days - firing from a cannon at the squares and at flashes, that is, into the white light, crawling from the conpa to the end along the front line under fire and blood, blood, blood. There are very few people left. In the evening, the order was to push the cannon to the tip of the breakthrough to support the infantry.

Our time has come! The order must be followed! Ha! Where even at night it is dangerous to walk bent over, we crowded together to our full height. There are twenty-one of us - so many, because the cannon must be carried by hand, the earth is so beaten and reared. The Germans are less than a hundred meters away, I think they can distinguish the stars on our

269

caps. But why are they silent?.. Not a single shot, as if the Germans are surprised by our wildly stupid recklessness, and are waiting with interest to see what will happen next... Suddenly, a pop from behind, a push in the back lifts me into the air! I'm flying and for a hundredth of a second I think "The End"...

22 August. I woke up in a pit near another cannon of our battery. They brought me here yesterday. It turns out that we ran into an anti-tank mine and exploded. Of the twenty-one people, two remained: me and one slightly wounded. Seventeen people were not found. Only by chance, about forty meters from the explosion, a leg with a piece of the stomach was found. She fell on the dugout of the commander of the infantry battalion "...

Question: who "grind" whom in this situation? The enemy, as we see, had enough shells, he spent them eight times less than the Soviet gunners. Because the Germans did not shoot at the square, but at the target, they did not suppress, but destroyed, and they never did such stupidity as counting the density of artillery barrels per kilometer of the front.

At the final stage, Lindemann from the Kirishi region transferred the 61st Infantry Division on trucks, which took over the defense line of the 126th Division near the workers' settlement No. 6. The Germans firmly held all positions along the entire perimeter of the bottleneck. As a result of fierce battles, the strike groups of the 67th and 8th armies only slightly penetrated the enemy defenses during the month. The tension in the conduct of hostilities began to weaken.

On August 22, Stalin ordered the further offensive to be stopped. Pohlman says:

“The Russian command failed to coordinate their offensive operations in the north and east with each other in such a way as to put the German command in a very difficult position. However, it was not necessary to expect that in the third battle on the same battlefield new unexpected ideas regarding the management of military operations would appear.

The analysis of the former colonel of the Wehrmacht coincides with the conclusions of the commander of the Leningrad Front. True, General Govorov blamed the failure on General Meretskov:

“The main and main reason that determined the special nature of the operation was the enemy's ability to continuously restore defense by successive replacement, as the divisions of one defending echelon were destroyed by divisions of the second, then the third echelon, etc. ...

The enemy's ability to continuously restore defenses in the Sinyavino direction is due to the unfulfilled calculation of interaction with the neighboring Volkhov Front. The actions of the Volkhov Front did not attract the operational reserves of the enemy, which allowed the enemy to withdraw part of the forces from the Leningrad Front and send them to the Leningrad Front ...

270

According to the plan of the operation, it was assumed that the enemy's reserves would be dispersed between both fronts. In fact, all seven pd. found themselves in front of the Leningrad front.

Well, what can I say. Küchler and Lindemann fought without any plan, using every opportunity to achieve victory, and who interfered with these figures?

However, who is talking about failure. Meretskov, for example, reports that he "forged" 68 enemy divisions and 6 brigades that had come from nowhere and "ground" parts of 21 divisions.

At the same time, Soviet losses amounted to about 80 thousand people killed and wounded, the enemy - about 20 thousand. The Red commanders lost 2660 soldiers per day, Lindemann - 670. Having laid down four of their fighters, they killed one German. This means that the main task set by Stalin was indeed completed:

"The formations of the 18th Army, due to large losses, could no longer threaten Leningrad. The Hitlerite command more than she thought about restoring the blockade, much less about storming the city.

And Russian women still give birth to Ivanov. Some alarm in Moscow was caused only by the fantastic consumption of ammunition. Colonel-General Nikolai Nikolaevich Voronov (1899-1968), the head of the artillery of the Red Army, sent his representative to the Volkhov Front to find out what was going on. But in the course of the investigation, it became known that Comrade Stalin positively assessed the results of the operation, in connection with which the investigation was immediately terminated. In Directive No. 30175, the Supreme Commander noted:

"The troops of these two fronts attracted significant operational reserves of the enemy, inflicted heavy defeats on his troops and thereby completed part of the near task for these fronts".

Somehow they forgot about the other "part" - the Mga station. Soviet troops liberated her only on January 21, 1944. It is not surprising that despite all the "achievements", the generals reluctantly recall the Mga operation of 1943, and sometimes even pretend that it did not exist. For example, General Borshchev, who commanded the division, wrote:

"In the summer of 1943, we fought heavy defensive battles (?) at the Sinyavin Heights."

However, Stalin had reasons for a good mood. The summer of 1943 was a turning point in the course of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War: the Soviet armies began to move to the West.

The first victorious salutes were marked by whitening in the Battle of Kursk. During the grandiose battle, it was possible to defeat the armored forces of the Wehrmacht, liberate Orel, Belgorod, Kharkov. The strategic initiative finally passed into the hands of the Red Army.

271

Finland actually stopped hostilities, its government, becoming more and more convinced of the inevitable collapse of the Millennium Reich, made persistent attempts to establish contacts with the leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition, probed the positions of London, Moscow and Washington regarding the conditions for concluding peace.

Anglo-American troops landed in Sicily and Italy, thus opening a Second Front in Europe.

The situation near Leningrad gradually changed in favor of the Red Army, the German "knife", abundantly irrigated with blood, more and more rusted and dulled.

The position of the troops of Field Marshal Küchler, exhausted by continuous Russian attacks, deteriorated significantly. The German command could not strengthen it either at the expense of strategic reserves or by transferring forces from other army groups.

Throughout 1943, it was as if there was no Army Group North for Hitler. If the Fuhrer remembered her, it was only in order to take away the most combat-ready divisions. During the second half of the year, Küchler had to part with the only motorized and seven infantry divisions, in return he received five divisions that had a large shortage in personnel and military equipment. The High Command still set the task of firmly defending positions and continuing the blockade of Leningrad, but in the rear of the army group, approximately along the line of the old border of the USSR with the Baltic states, the construction of a new defensive line - the Panther line - had already begun.

272

Finally

By January 30, 1944, Soviet troops broke through the enemy defenses on the front from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ilmen, and defeated the 18th German Army. In the southern direction, it was possible to push the enemy back 100 km from Leningrad, in the western direction - 80 km. Lindemann's army broke up into two isolated groups: the main one, retreating to Luga, and the western one, retreating to Narva.

On January 27, in honor of the complete lifting of the blockade over the Neva, a victorious salute thundered. And that was the most successful phase of the operation. Then the Germans again began to act "not according to plan." As a result, the troops of the Volkhov Front failed to capture Luga in a timely manner, which allowed the enemy to withdraw their forces in an organized manner from the Mgin'sk ledge, from the Chudovo and Lyuban regions. The troops of the Leningrad Front were unable to encircle the enemy in the area of Tosno and Pavlovsk.

Throughout February, the most difficult battles went on north and east of Luga, the Germans were simply and unpretentiously driven out of the occupied territories, and they systematically retreated to the west and entrenched themselves on the previously prepared Panther line. It was not possible to liberate Narva, Pskov and Ostrov, to break into the Baltic States - even more so.

On March 1, 1944, the offensive had to be stopped. As a result, 3 German airfield divisions were completely destroyed, and another 17 divisions were defeated. But the Soviet losses also exceeded all previous "indicators" - 314 thousand people.

The complete liberation of the Leningrad region took place only in June-July 1944, when, during the Vyborg-Petrozavodsk operation, the Leningrad and Karelian fronts defeated the Finnish army, while losing 96 thousand soldiers and officers. The Red Army, as before, fought with great bloodshed; it did not know how to do it and could not.

Now let's take a pen and paper and do simple arithmetic calculations.

In order not to be accused of the fact that the numbers are "taken from the ceiling", let's turn to the well-known statistical collection of the Russian General Staff. *

That's what it says there.

* See: "Secrecy removed. Losses of the Armed Forces of the USSR in 8 wars, hostilities and armed conflicts. M.: Military Publishing, 1993.

Losses of the Northern and Northwestern fronts and the Baltic Fleet in the Leningrad strategic defensive operation from July 10 to September 30, 1941 - 344,926 people (of which 214,078 were irretrievable losses);

Losses of the Northern and Karelian fronts in the defensive operation in Karelia from June 29 to October 10, 1941 - 130,000 (65,000 irretrievable losses);

Losses of the 7th Separate Army in 1942-1944 - 55.488 (11.155);

273

Losses of the Volkhov Front in 1941-1944 - 965.857 (29.8623); Losses of the Leningrad Front in 1941-1943 - 1.039.708 (199.407);

Losses of the Leningrad and 1st Baltic fronts and the Baltic Fleet in the Leningrad-Novgorod strategic offensive operation from January 14 to March 1, 1944 - 263.653 (64.675);

Losses of the Karelian and Leningrad fronts in the Vyborg-Petrozavodsk offensive operation from June 10 to August 9, 1944 - 96.375 (23.674).

In total, according to official and, by all accounts, underestimated data, 2,896,007 people were killed, wounded, missing from July 1941, when the first battles began on the Luga line, to August 1944. Including 876.612 people - irrevocably.

These are the "many thousands" that Meretskov wrote about, laid in the ground for the sake of saving "millions". The Marshal did not understand that more than a million killed and maimed only by his personal leadership of soldiers and officers in two or three generations would turn into tens of millions of unborn people. After all, the most healthy and active part of the nation always perishes in war.

Let's add some illustrations to the above.

"By all accounts, we should have lost the war. Hitler calculated everything correctly, the German General Staff clearly carried out the war plan. The opponent made only one mistake. He believed that the first months of the war

break the spirit of the people. That did not happen. The psychological factor has become a formidable weapon - the only weapon that the enemy did not have.

I remember how one of our militia commanders, Podrezov, remained in the trench. We fled, but he remained, telling us: "I can no longer retreat. Ashamed". and fired back until he was killed."

(From the report of the writer Daniil Granin at the solemn meeting in Karlshorst).

"The day before I was wounded, one colonel took the height. He was drunk on the railcar, and as soon as replenishment approached, he sent him into battle. And young, untrained, poorly trained, psychologically still unprepared guys laid down their heads. The Colonel, it turns out, hastened to report that the hill had been taken. And it's scary - when they report something like this ahead of time. He knew that he could not escape the "penalty", he knew that he would sober up without shoulder straps and on the bench of a military tribunal. But before that, he knocked out five or six Russian villages at a height that he never took.

(From an interview with the writer Viktor Astafyev to the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper).

"Today you were lucky, death passed by. But tomorrow we must attack again. You have to die again. And not heroically, but without pomp, without an orchestra and speeches, but in the mud, in the stench. And no one will notice your death: you will lie down in a big stack

274

corpses near the railway and you will rot, forgotten by everyone in the sticky slush of the Pogostyinsky swamps ...

In order not to go into battle, dodgers sought to get cushy jobs: in the kitchen, rear clerk, storekeeper, orderly chief, etc. and so on. But when only a few remained in the companies, they combed the rear with an iron comb, tearing off those who had stuck and directing them into battle.

The most pervasive remained in place. An honest manager of a food warehouse, for example, was always sent to the front line, leaving the thief behind. After all, an honest man will give everything in full to the soldiers, hiding nothing either for himself or for his superiors. But the authorities like to eat fatter. The thief, not forgetting himself, will always please the superior. How can you lose such a valuable frame? Whom to send to the front line? Of course, the first one! There was a sort of circularity. His supported his. And if some idiot tried to get justice, they drowned him all together ...

One must think that this selection of the Russian people is a time bomb: it will explode in a few generations, in the 20th century! century, when the mass of scum selected and nurtured by the Bolsheviks will give birth to new generations of their own kind.

(From the "Memoirs" of Professor Nikolai Nikulin).

The "thousands" of casualties casually mentioned by the red commanders cannot be counted by specialists until now. I think it's simply impossible. No statistical studies based on "reports from the fronts, armies and other active groupings of troops" will give an exact figure of our losses. Because these reports themselves testify only to a complete disregard for human life and human death.

So, in the spring of 1942, political instructor Komkov reported to the head of the Political Directorate of the Volkhov Front about an inspection in the 374th Infantry Division:

There is no record of those killed and buried, wounded and missing during the fighting. The chiefs of staff of units 1246, 1242 could not give information on March 28, 1942 about the number of dead and buried, wounded and missing ...

Funeral teams in formations, in parts are not organized. The funeral is assigned in parts to the trophy teams, and at the headquarters of the formation - to the head of the AChE. The heads of the trophy teams do not report to the headquarters about the funeral.

Funeral maps with a mark of mass graves and an attached list of those buried in them are not kept, both in formations and units.

Description of the area of mass graves, as well as single ones, is not conducted ...

The Red Army books were not issued to ordinary personnel, and the commanding staff also did not have identification cards.

The cleaning of the corpses is carried out out of time, in view of which, at the funeral

275

no identification documents are found for the dead, which are seized at the time of death by orderlies, comrades or commanders "... And here is a fragment from the report of the head of the political department of the Volkhov Front to the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army:

"On the site of the 327th division of the 2nd shock army, on March 13 and 14, 31 corpses were picked up and buried, of which only 7 corpses were identified. The rest did not have any documents ...

According to the 259th division of the same army, since the beginning of February, 248 corpses have been picked up and buried, 169 of which have not been identified. In addition, during the march they picked up and buried 57 corpses from various parts, also without identification.

In the 1248th regiment of the 376th division of the 52nd army, according to the list, 450 people are dead, and the workers of the regiment headquarters determine the death toll at 750 people. Lists of the wounded and missing have not been compiled. In the 38th regiment of the 65th division, the lists of personnel are not kept ...

In the 1248th regiment, during the entire period of the war, notifications were sent for 170 people. In the 1250th regiment of the same 376th division, not a single notice was sent to the relatives of the dead. In the unit, 33 letters were found from relatives of servicemen, in which they ask for information about the fate of their relatives. Although many letters were received long ago, they are still left unanswered...

Nobody ever counted them. They weren't even buried. Trophy and economic teams, mobilized "civilians" - they were all engaged in "cleaning the area from corpses." The fallen were remembered and remembered only by those who managed to survive, despite the efforts of Meretskov, Zhukov, Fedyuninsky, Khozin and others of the same kind.

"We remember the rampart of corpses almost as tall as a man, which we had to overcome when attacking the Sinyavin Heights. We remember the swamp in front of the village of Gai-tolovo, filled with dead bodies. The attackers ran along them, like along the gati. We remember Kruglyaya Grove, once famous on the Volkhov Front: divisions of the 2nd Shock Army were killed near it...

We remember the rest house in the village of Voronovo, the height of "Forest" - "height of death", as the soldiers called it ... It would be possible to list the names of heights and strongholds for a long time. Losses near each of them exceeded, for example, the victims of the Battle of Borodino "...

Nevsky Piglet, Sinyavino, Gaitolovo, Tortolovo, Mishkino, Voronovo, Porechye, Korbusel, Pogostye, Kirishi, Myasnoy Bor and many other places swept off the face of the earth by the village, in the words of the "Volkhovite" D.K. Zherebov, are a "giant necklace cemeteries covering St. Petersburg from the east within a radius of sixty to one hundred kilometers.

After the war, the memory of them, and at the same time of military failures and terrible losses, was systematically destroyed by bulldozers, carrying out land reclamation work, planting gardens, erecting rest houses and national economic objects on the bones.

276

For example, in the former village of Gaytolovo, on the site of fierce battles, a military unit, "heir to glorious traditions", built in 1990 a pig-breeding complex with a manure sump. An indignant letter from a war participant to the Ministry of Defense was followed by a mocking answer that "veterans also love pork."

The Soviet authorities showed the same attitude towards the losses of the civilian population: the main task was not to count, but to hide. Therefore, already in February 1949, the Leningrad Defense Museum was actually destroyed.

A memorial sign at one of the German cemeteries near St. Petersburg. The inscription on the stone reads:

Traveler, stop in reverence And tell the Motherland
that you saw Us lying here!

We perished by the law of duty!

The difference in attitude towards the dead became especially clear after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the notorious "Iron Curtain". Germany to this day buries its fallen soldiers. Thus, a memorial complex was created near the village of Sologubovka, where the remains of about 60 thousand Wehrmacht soldiers were reburied. For their search and burial, the Germans hired local residents for a fee.

The winners, as before, have more interesting activities. The bones of the fallen Red Army soldiers are raked into landfills and garbage heaps. Only individual enthusiasts collect them and store them in bags in sheds and barns - the state has no money for funerals.

277

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280

Briefly about the author

Vladimir Vasilyevich Beshanov was born in 1962. In 1984 he graduated from the Kaliningrad Higher Naval School. For eight years he served on the ships of the Northern and Black Sea Fleets. In 1992, being a lieutenant commander, he quit due to the "Ukrainization" of the Black Sea Fleet and returned to his native Brest. Since 1996 he has been teaching military history at the Brest Pedagogical University and writing books.

To date he has published the following works: Sixty Battles of Napoleon (2000)

Frog People: A History of Submarine Diversionary Means and Forces (co-authored) (2000)

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281